ETHEL MORTON'S ENTERPRISE

by Mabell S. C. Smith

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The Ethel Morton Books

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BY

MABELL S. C. SMITH

THE GOLDSMITH PUBLISHING CO.
CLEVELAND
MADE IN U. S. A.

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ETHEL MORTON'S ENTERPRISE

CHAPTER I

HOW IT STARTED

ETHEL MORTON, called from the color of her eyes Ethel "Blue" to distinguish her from her cousin, also Ethel Morton, whose brown eyes gave her the nickname of Ethel "Brown," was looking out of the window at the big, damp flakes of snow that whirled down as if in a hurry to cover the dull January earth with a gay white carpet.

"The giants are surely having a pillow fight this afternoon," she laughed.

"In honor of your birthday," returned her cousin.

"The snowflakes are really as large as feathers," added Dorothy Smith, another cousin, who had come over to spend the afternoon.

All three cousins had birthdays in January. The Mortons always celebrated the birthdays of every member of the family, but since there were three in the same month they usually had one large party and noticed the other days with less ceremony. This year Mrs. Emerson, Ethel Brown's grandmother, had invited the whole United Service Club, to which the girls belonged, to go to New York on a day's expedition. They had ascended the Woolworth

Tower, gone through the Natural History Museum, seen the historic Jumel Mansion, lunched at a large hotel and gone to the Hippodrome. Everybody called it a perfectly splendid party, and Ethel Blue and Dorothy were quite willing to consider it as a part of their own birthday observances.

Next year it would be Dorothy's turn. This year her party had consisted merely in taking her cousins on an automobile ride. A similar ride had been planned for Ethel Blue's birthday, but the giants had plans of their own and the young people had had to give way to them. Dorothy had come over to spend the afternoon and dine with her cousins, however. She lived just around the corner, so her mother was willing to let her go in spite of the gathering drifts, because Roger, Ethel Brown's older brother, would be able to take her home such a short distance, even if he had to shovel a path all the way.

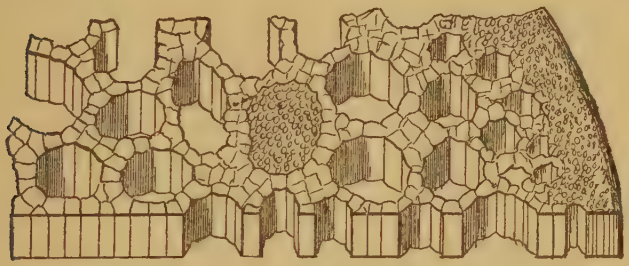
The snow was so beautiful that they had not wanted to do anything all the afternoon but gaze at it. Dicky, Ethel Brown's little brother, who was the "honorary member" of the U. S. C., had come in wanting to be amused, and they had opened the window for an inch and brought in a few of the huge flakes which grew into ferns and starry crystals under the magnifying glass that Mrs. Morton always kept on the desk.

"Wouldn't it be fun if our eyeth could thee thingth like that!" exclaimed Dicky, and the girls agreed with him that it would add many marvels to our already marvellous world.

"As long as our eyes can't see the wee things I'm

glad Aunt Marion taught us to use this glass when we were little," said Ethel Blue who had been brought up with her cousins ever since she was a baby.

"Mother says that when she and Uncle Roger and Uncle Richard," said Dorothy, referring to Ethel Brown's and Ethel Blue's fathers, her uncles—"were all young at home together Grandfather Morton used to make them examine some new thing every



"It looked just as if it were a house with a lot of rooms"

day and tell him about it. Sometimes it would be the materials a piece of clothing was made of, or the paper of a magazine or a flower—anything that came along."

"When I grow up," said Ethel Blue, "I'm going to have a large microscope like the one they have in the biology class in the high school. Helen took me to the class with her one day and the teacher let me look through it. It was perfectly wonderful. There was a slice of the stem of a small plant there and it looked just as if it were a house with a lot of rooms. Each room was a cell, Helen said."

"A very suitable name," commented Ethel Brown.

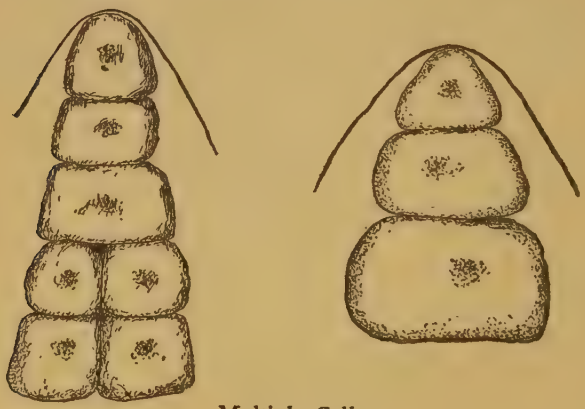
"What are you people talking about?" asked Helen, who came in at that instant.

"I was telling the girls about that time when I

Single Cell Double Cell

looked through the high school microscope," answered Ethel Blue.

"You saw among other things, some cells in the



Multiple Cells

very lowest form of life. A single cell is all there is to the lowest animal or vegetable."

"What do you mean by a single cell?"

"Just a tiny mass of jelly-like stuff that is called protoplasm. The cells grow larger and divide until

there are a lot of them. That's the way plants and animals grow."

"If each is as small as those I saw under the microscope there must be billions in me!" and Ethel Blue stretched her arms to their widest extent and threw her head upwards as far as her neck would allow.

"I guess there are, young woman," and Helen went off to hang her snowy coat where it would dry before she put it in the closet.

"There'th a thnow flake that lookth like a plant!" cried Dicky who had slipped open the window wide enough to capture an especially large feather.

"It really does!" exclaimed Ethel Blue, who was nearest to her little cousin and caught a glimpse of the picture through the glass before the snow melted.

"Did it have 'root, stem and leaves'?" asked Dorothy. "That's what I always was taught made a plant—root, stem and leaves. Would Helen call a cell that you couldn't see a plant?"

"Yes," came a faint answer from the hall. "If it's living and isn't an animal it's a vegetable—though way down in the lower forms it's next to impossible to tell one from the other. There isn't any rule that doesn't have an exception."

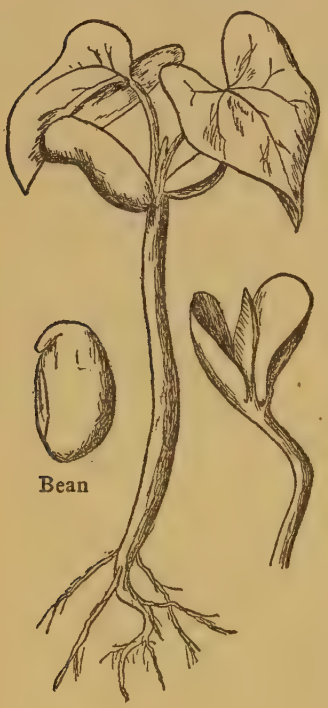
"I should think the biggest difference would be that animals eat plants and plants eat—what do plants eat?" ended Dorothy lamely.

"That is the biggest difference," assented Helen. "Plants are fed by water and mineral substances that come from the soil directly, while animals get the mineral stuff by way of the plants."

"Father told us once about some plants that caught insects. They eat animals."

"And there are animals that eat both vegetables and animals, you and I, for instance. So you can't draw any sharp lines."

"When a plant gets out of the cell stage and has a 'root, stem and leaves' then you know it's a plant if you don't before," insisted Dorothy, determined to make her knowledge useful.



Bean Plant

"Did any of you notice the bean I've been sprouting in my room?" asked Helen.

"I'll get it, I'll get it!" shouted Dicky.

"Trust Dicky not to let anything escape his notice!" laughed his big sister.

Dicky returned in a minute or two carrying very carefully a shallow earthenware dish from which some thick yellow-green tips were sprouting.

"I soaked some peas and beans last week," explained Helen, "and when they were tender I planted them. You see they're poking up their heads now."

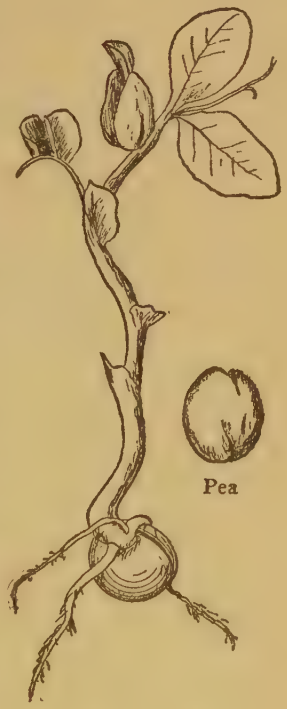
"They don't look like real leaves," commented Ethel Blue.

"This first pair is really the two halves of the bean. They hold the food for the little plant. They're so fat and pudgy that they never do look like real leaves. In other plants where there isn't so much food they become quite like their later brothers."

"Isn't it queer that whatever makes the plant grow knows enough to send the leaves up and the roots down," said Dorothy thoughtfully.

"That's the way the life principle works," agreed Helen. "This other little plant is a pea and I want you to see if you notice any difference between it and the bean."

She pulled up the wee growth very delicately and they all bent over it as it lay in her hand.



The Pea Plant

"It hathn't got fat leaveth," cried Dicky.

"Good for Dicky," exclaimed Helen. "He has beaten you girls. You see the food in the pea is packed so tight that the pea gets discouraged about trying to send up those first leaves and gives it up

as a bad job. They stay underground and do their feeding from there."

"A sort of cold storage arrangement," smiled Ethel Brown.

"After these peas are a little taller you'd find if you pulled them up that the supply of food had all been used up. There will be nothing down there but a husk."

"What happens when this bean plant uses up all its food?"

"There's nothing left but a sort of skin that drops off. You can see how it works with the bean because that is done above the ground."

"Won't it hurt those plants to pull them up this way?"

"It will set them back, but I planted a good many so as to be able to pull them up at different ages and see how they looked."

"You pulled that out so gently I don't believe it will be hurt much."

"Probably it will take a day or two for it to catch up with its neighbors. It will have to settle its roots again, you see."

"What are you doing this planting for?" asked Dorothy.

"For the class at school. We get all the different kinds of seeds we can—the ones that are large enough to examine easily with only a magnifying glass like this one. Some we cut open and examine carefully inside to see how the new leaves are to be fed, and then we plant others and watch them grow."

"I'd like to know why you never told me about

that before?" demanded Ethel Brown. "I'm going to get all the grains and fruits I can right off and plant them. Is all that stuff in a horse chestnut leaf-food?"

"The horse chestnut is a hungry one, isn't it?"

"I made some bulbs blossom by putting them in a tall glass in a dark place and bringing them into the light when they had started to sprout," said Ethel Blue, "but I think this is more fun. I'm going to plant some, too."

"Grandmother Emerson always has beautiful bulbs. She has plenty in her garden that she allows to stay there all winter, and they come up and are scrumptious very early in the Spring. Then she takes some of them into the house and keeps them in the dark, and they blossom all through the cold weather."

"Mother likes bulbs, too," said Dorothy, "crocuses and hyacinths and Chinese lilies—but I never cared much about them. Somehow the bulb itself looks too fat. I don't care much for fat things or people."

"Don't think of it as fat; it's the food supply."

"Well, I think they're greedy things, and I'm not going ever to bother with them. I'll leave them to Mother, but I am really going to plant a garden this summer. I think it will be loads of fun."

"We haven't much room for a garden here," said Helen, "but we always have some vegetables and a few flowers."

"Why don't we have a fine one this summer, Helen?" demanded Ethel Brown. "You're learning

a lot about the way plants grow, I should think you'd like to grow them."

"I believe I should if you girls would help me. There never has been any member of the family who was interested, and I wasn't wild about it myself, and I just never got started."

"The truth is," confessed Ethel Brown, "if we don't have a good garden Dorothy here will have something that will put ours entirely in the shade."

The girls all laughed. They never had known Dorothy until the previous summer. When she came to live in Rosemont in September they had learned that she was extremely energetic and that she never abandoned any plan that she attempted. The Ethels knew, therefore, that if Dorothy was going to have a garden the next summer they'd better have a garden, too, or else they would see little of her.

"If we both have gardens Dorothy will condescend to come and see ours once in a while and we can exchange ideas and experiences," continued Ethel Brown.

"I'd love to have a garden," said Ethel Blue. "Do you suppose Roger would be willing to dig it up for us?"

"Dig up what?" asked Roger, stamping into the house in time to hear his name.

The girls told him of their new plan.

"I'll help all of you if you'll plant one flower that I like; plant enough of it so that I can pick a lot any time I want to. The trouble with the little garden we've had is that there weren't enough flowers for

more than the centrepiece in the dining-room. Whenever I wanted any I always had to go and give a squint at the dining room table and then do some calculation as to whether there could be a stalk or two left after Helen had cut enough for the next day."

"And there generally weren't any!" sympathized Helen.

"What flower is it you're so crazy over?" asked Ethel Blue.

"Sweetpeas, my child. Never in all my life have I had enough sweetpeas."

"I've had more than enough," groaned Ethel Brown. "One summer I stayed a fortnight with Grandmother Emerson and I picked the sweetpeas for her every morning. She was very particular about having them picked because they blossom better if they're picked down every day."

"It must have taken you an awfully long time; she always has rows and rows of them," said Helen.

"I worked a whole hour in the sun every single day! If we have acres of sweetpeas we'll all have to help Roger pick."

"I'm willing to," said Ethel Blue. "I'm like Roger, I think they're darling; just like butterflies or something with wings."

"We'll have to cast our professional eyes into the garden and decide on the best place for the sweetpeas," said Roger. "They have to be planted early, you know. If we plant them just anywhere they'll be sure to be in the way of something that grows shorter so it will be hidden."

"Or grows taller and is a color that fights with them."

"It would be hard to find a color that wasn't matched by one sweetpea or another. They seem to be of every combination under the sun."

"It's queer, some of the combinations would be perfectly hideous in a dress but they look all right in Nature's dress."

"We'll send for some seedsmen's catalogues and order a lot."

"I suppose you don't care what else goes into the garden?" asked Helen.

"Ladies, I'll do all the digging you want, and plant any old thing you ask me to, if you'll just let me have my sweetpeas," repeated Roger.

"A bargain," cried all the girls.

"I'll write for some seed catalogues this afternoon," said Helen. "It's so appropriate, when it's snowing like this!"

" 'Take time by the fetlock,' as one of the girls says in 'Little Women,' " laughed Roger. "If you'll cast your orbs out of the window you'll see that it has almost stopped. Come on out and make a snow man."

Every one jumped at the idea, even Helen who laid aside her writing until the evening, and there was a great putting on of heavy coats and overshoes and mittens.

CHAPTER II

A SNOW MAN AND SEED CATALOGUES

THE snow was of just the right dampness to make snowballs, and a snow man, after all, is just a succession of snowballs, properly placed. Roger started the one to go at the base by rolling up a ball beside the house and then letting it roll down the bank toward the gate.

"See it gather moss!" he cried. "It's just the opposite of a rolling stone, isn't it?"

When it stopped it was of goodly size and it was standing in the middle of the little front lawn.

"It couldn't have chosen a better location," commended Helen.

"We need a statue in the front yard," said Ethel Brown.

"This will give a truly artistic air to the whole place," agreed Ethel Blue.

"What's the next move?" asked Dorothy, who had not had much experience in this kind of manufacture.

"We start over here by the fence and roll another one, smaller than this, to serve as the body," explained Roger. "Come on here and help me; this snow is so heavy it needs an extra pusher already."

Dorothy lent her muscles to the task of pushing on the snow man's "torso," as Ethel Blue, who knew something about drawing figures, called it. The

Ethels, meanwhile, were making the arms out of small snowballs placed one against the next and slapped hard to make them stick. Helen was rolling a ball for the head and Dicky had disappeared behind the house to hunt for a cane.

"Heigho!" Roger called after him. "I saw an old clay pipe stuck behind a beam in the woodshed the other day. See if it's still there and bring it along."

Dicky nodded and raised a mittened paw to indicate that he understood his instructions.

It required the united efforts of Helen and Roger to set the gentleman's head on his shoulders, and Helen ran in to the cellar to get some bits of coal to make his eyes and mouth.

"He hasn't any expression. Let me try to model a nose for the poor lamb!" begged Ethel Blue. "Stick on this arm, Roger, while I sculpture these marble features."

By dint of patting and punching and adding a long and narrow lump of snow, one side of the head looked enough different from the other to warrant calling it the face. To make the difference more marked Dorothy broke some straws from the covering of one of the rosebushes and created hair with them.

"Now nobody could mistake this being his speaking countenance," decided Helen, sticking two pieces of coal where eyes should be and adding a third for the mouth. Dicky had found the pipe and she thrust it above his lips.

"Merely two-lips, not ruby lips," commented

Roger. "This is an original fellow; he's 'not like other girls.' "

"This cane is going to hold up his right arm; I don't feel so certain about the left," remarked Ethel Brown anxiously.

"Let it fall at his side. That's some natural, anyway. He's walking, you see, swinging one arm and with the other on the top of his cane."

"He'll take cold if he doesn't have something on his head. I'm nervous about him," and Dorothy bent a worried look at their creation.

"Hullo," cried a voice from beyond the gate. "He's bully. Just make him a cap out of this bandanna and he'll look like a Venetian gondolier."

James Hancock and his sister, Margaret, the Glen Point members of the United Service Club, came through the gate, congratulated Ethel Blue on her birthday, and paid elaborate compliments to the sculptors of the Gondolier.

"That red hanky on his massive brow gives the touch of color he needed," said Margaret.

"We don't maintain that his features are 'faultily faultless,' " quoted Roger, "but we do insist that they're 'icily regular.' "

"Thanks to the size of the nose Ethel Blue stuck on they're not 'splendidly null.' "

"No, there's no 'nullness' about that nose," agreed James. "That's 'some' nose!"

When they were all in the house and preparing for dinner Ethel Blue unwrapped the gift that Margaret had brought for her birthday. It was a shallow bowl of dull green pottery in which was growing

a grove of thick, shiny leaves. The plants were three or four inches tall and seemed to be in the pink of condition.

"This is for the top of your Christmas desk," Margaret explained.

"It's perfectly beautiful," exclaimed not only Ethel Blue but all the other girls, while Roger peered over their shoulders to see what it was.

"I planted it myself," said Margaret with considerable pride. "Each one is a little grapefruit tree."

"Grapefruit? What we have for breakfast? It grows like this?"

"Mother has some in a larger bowl and it is really lovely as a centrepiece on the dining room table."

"Watch me save grapefruit seeds!" and Ethel Brown ran out of the room to leave an immediate request in the kitchen that no grapefruit seeds should be thrown away when the fruit was being prepared for the table.

"When Mr. Morton and I were in Florida last winter," said Mrs. Morton, "they told us that it was not a great number of years ago that grapefruit was planted only because it was a handsome shrub on the lawn. The fruit never was eaten, but was thrown away after it fell from the tree."

"Now nobody can get enough of it," smiled Helen.

"Mother has a receipt for grapefruit marmalade that is better than the English orange marmalade that is made of both sweet and sour oranges," said Dorothy. "Sometimes the sour oranges are hard

to find in the market, but grapefruit seems to have both flavors in itself."

"Is it much work?" asked Margaret.

"It isn't much work at any one time but it takes several days to get it done."

"Why?"

"First you have to cut up the fruit, peel and all, into tiny slivers. That's a rather long undertaking and it's hard unless you have a very, very sharp knife."

"I've discovered that in preparing them for breakfast."

"The fruit are of such different sizes that you have to weigh the result of your paring. To every pound of cut-up fruit add a pint of water and let it stand over night. In the morning pour off that water and fill the kettle again and let it boil until the toughest bit of skin is soft, and then let it stand over night once more."

"It seems to do an awful lot of resting," remarked Roger.

"A sort of 'weary Willie,' " commented James.

"When you're ready to go at it again, you weigh it once more and add four times as many pounds of sugar as you have fruit."

"You must have to make it in a wash-boiler!"

"Not quite as bad as that, but you'll be surprised to find how much three or four grapefruit will make. You boil this together until it is as thick as you like to have your marmalade."

"I can recommend Aunt Louise's marmalade," said Ethel Brown. "It's the very best I ever tasted.

She taught me to make these grapefruit chips," and she handed about a bonbon dish laden with delicate strips of sugared peel.

"Let's have this receipt, too," begged Margaret, as Roger went to answer the telephone.

"You can squeeze out the juice and pulp and add a quart of water to a cup of juice, sweeten it and make grapefruit-ade instead of lemonade for a variety. Then take the skins and cut out all the white inside part as well as you can, leaving just the rind."

"The next step must be to snip the rind into these long, narrow shavings."

"It is, and you put them in cold water and let them come to a boil and boil twenty minutes. Then drain off all the water and add cold water and do it again."

"What's the idea of two boilings?" asked James.

"I suppose it must be to take all the bitterness out of the skin at the same time that it is getting soft."

"Does this have to stand over night?"

"Yes, this sits and meditates all night. Then you put it on to boil again in a syrup made of one cup of water and four cups of sugar, and boil it until the bits are all saturated with the sweetness. If you want to eat them right off you roll them now in powdered sugar or confectioner's sugar, but if you aren't in a hurry you put them into a jar and keep the air out and roll them just before you want to serve them."

"They certainly are bully good," remarked James, taking several more pieces.

"That call was from Tom Watkins," announced Roger, returning from the telephone, and referring to a member of the United Service Club who, with his sister, Della, lived in New York.

"O dear, they can't come!" prophesied Ethel Blue.

"He says he has just been telephoning to the railroad and they say that all the New Jersey trains are delayed and so Mrs. Watkins thought he'd better not try to bring Della out. She sends her love to you, Ethel Blue, and her best wishes for your birthday and says she's got a present for you that is different from any plant you ever saw in a conservatory."

"That's what Margaret's is," laughed Ethel. "Isn't it queer you two girls should give me growing things when we were talking about gardens this afternoon and deciding to have one this summer."

"One!" repeated Dorothy. "Don't forget mine. There'll be two."

"If Aunt Louise should find a lot and start to build there'd be another," suggested Ethel Brown.

"O, let's go into the gardening business," cried Roger. "I've already offered to be the laboring man at the beck and call of these young women all for the small reward of having all the sweetpeas I want to pick."

"What we're afraid of is that he won't want to pick them," laughed Ethel Brown. "We're thinking of binding him to do a certain amount of picking every day."

"Anyway, the Morton-Smith families are going to have gardens and Helen is going to write for seed

catalogues this very night before she seeks her downy couch—she has vowed she will."

"Mother has always had a successful garden, she'll be able to give you advice," offered Margaret.

"We'll ask it from every one we know, I rather imagine," and Dorothy beamed at the prospect of doing something that had been one of her great desires all her life.

The little thicket of grapefruit trees served as the centrepiece of Ethel Blue's dinner table, and every one admired all over again its glossy leaves and sturdy stems.

"When spring comes we'll set them out in the garden and see what happens," promised Ethel Blue.

"We have grapefruit salad to-night. You must have sent a wireless over to the kitchen," Ethel Brown declared to Margaret.

It was a delicious salad, the cubes of the grapefruit being mixed with cubes of apple and of celery, garnished with cherries and served on crisp yellow-green lettuce leaves with French dressing.

Ethel Blue always liked to see her Aunt Marion make French dressing at the table, for her white hands moved swiftly and skilfully among the ingredients. Mary brought her a bowl that had been chilled on ice. Into it she poured four tablespoonfuls of olive oil, added a scant half teaspoonful of salt with a dash of red pepper which she stirred until the salt was dissolved. To that combination she added one tablespoonful either of lemon juice or vinegar a drop at a time and stirring constantly so that the oil might take up its sharper neighbor.

Dorothy particularly approved her Aunt Marion's manner of putting her salads together. To-night, for instance, she did not have the plates brought in from the kitchen with the salad already upon them.

"That always reminds me of a church fair," she declared.

She was willing to give herself the trouble of preparing the salad for her family and guests with her own hands. From a bowl of lettuce she selected the choicest leaves for the plate before her; upon these she placed the fruit and celery mixture, dotted the top with a cherry and poured the dressing over all. It was fascinating to watch her, and Margaret wished that her mother served salad that way.

The Club was indeed incomplete without the Watkinses, but the members nevertheless were sufficiently amused by several of the "Does"—things to do—that one or another suggested. First they did shadow drawings. The dining table proved to be the most convenient spot for that. They all sat around under the strong electric light. Each had a block of rather heavy paper with a rough surface, and each was given a camel's hair brush, a bottle of ink, some water and a small saucer. From a vase of flowers and leaves and ferns which Mrs. Morton contributed to the game each selected what he wanted to draw. Then, holding his leaf so that the light threw a sharp shadow upon his pad, he quickly painted the shadow with the ink, thinning it with water upon the saucer so that the finished painting showed several shades of gray.

"The beauty of this stunt is that a fellow who can't draw at all can turn out almost as good a masterpiece as Ethel Blue here, who has the makings of a real artist," and James gazed at his production with every evidence of satisfaction.

As it happened none of them except Ethel Blue could draw at all well, so that the next game had especial difficulties.

"All there is to it is to draw something and let us guess what it is," said Ethel Blue.

"You haven't given all the rules," corrected Roger. "Ethel Blue makes two dots on a piece of paper—or a short line and a curve—anything she feels like making. Then we copy them and draw something that will include those two marks and she sits up and 'ha-has' and guesses what it is."

"I promise not to laugh," said Ethel Blue.

"Don't make any such rash promise," urged Helen. "You might do yourself an injury trying not to when you see mine."

It was fortunate for Ethel Blue that she was released from the promise, for her guesses went wide of the mark. Ethel Brown made something that she guessed to be a hen, Roger called it a book, Dicky maintained firmly that it was a portrait of himself. The rest gave it up, and they all needed a long argument by the artist to believe that she had meant to draw a pair of candlesticks.

"Somebody think of a game where Ethel Brown can do herself justice," cried James, but no one seemed to have any inspiration, so they all went to the fire, where they cracked nuts and told stories.

"If you'll write those orders for the seed catalogues I'll post them to-night," James suggested to Helen.

"Oh, will you? Margaret and I will write them together."

"What's the rush?" demanded Roger. "This is only January."

"I know just how the girls feel," sympathized James. "When I make up my mind to do a thing I want to begin right off, and the first step of this new scheme is to get the catalogues hereinbefore mentioned."

"We can plan out our back yards any time, I should think," said Dorothy.

"Father says that somebody—was it Bacon, Margaret?—says that a man's nature runs always either to herbs or to weeds. Let's start ours running to herbs in the first month of the year and perhaps by the time the herbs appear we'll catch up with them."

CHAPTER III

DOROTHY TELLS HER SECRET

HOW queer it is that when you're interested in something you keep seeing and hearing things connected with it!" exclaimed Ethel Blue about a week after her birthday, when Della Watkins came out from town to bring her her belated birthday gift.

The present proved to be a slender hillock covered with a silky green growth exquisite in texture and color.

"What is it? What is it?" cried Ethel Blue. "We mentioned plants and gardens on my birthday and that very evening Margaret brought me this grapefruit jungle and now you've brought me this. Do tell me exactly what it is."

"A cone, child. That's all. A Norway spruce cone. When it is dry its scales are open. I filled them with grass seed and put the cone in a small tumbler so that the lower end might be damp all the time. The dampness makes the scales close and starts the seed to sprouting. This has been growing a few days and the cone is almost hidden."

"It's one of the prettiest plants—would you call it a plant or a greenhouse?—I ever saw. Does it have to be a Norway spruce cone?"

"O, no. Only they have very regular scales that

hold the seed well. I brought you out two more of them and some grass seed and canary seed so you could try it for yourself."

"You're a perfect duck," and Ethel gave her friend a hug. "Now let me show you what one of the girls at school gave Ethel Brown."

She indicated a strange-looking brown object hanging before the window.

"What in the world is it? It looks—yes, it looks like a sweet potato."

"That's what it is—a sweet potato with one end cut off and a cage of tape to hold it. You see it's sprouting already, and they say that the vines hang down from it and it looks like a little green hanging basket."

"What's the object of cutting off the end?"

"Anna—that's Ethel Brown's friend—said that she scooped hers out just a little bit and put a few drops of water inside so that the sun shouldn't dry it too much."

"I should think it would grow better in a dark place. Don't you know how Irish potatoes send out those white shoots when they're in the cellar?"

"She said she started hers in the cellar and then brought them into the light."

"Just like bulbs."

"Exactly. Aunt Louise is having great luck with her bulbs now. She had them in the cellar and now she is bringing them out a pot at a time, so she has something new coming forward every few days."

"Dorothy doesn't care much for bulbs, but I think it's pretty good fun. You can make them blossom

just about when you please by keeping them in the dark or bringing them into the light. I'm going to ask Aunt Louise to give me some of hers when they're finished flowering. She says you can plant them out of doors and next year they'll bloom in the garden."

"Mother has some this winter, too. I'll ask her for them after she's through forcing them."

"I like them in the garden, too—tulips and hyacinths and daffodils and narcissus and jonquils. They come so early and give you a feeling that spring really has arrived."

"You look as if spring had really arrived in the house here. If there wasn't a little bit of that snow man left in front I shouldn't know it had snowed last week. How in the world did you get all these shrubs to blossom now? They don't seem to realize that it's only January."

"That's another thing that's happened since my birthday. Margaret told us about bringing branches of the spring shrubs into the house and making them come out in water, so we've been trying it. She sent over those yellow bells, the Forsythia, and Roger brought in the pussy willows from the brook on the way to Mr. Emerson's."

"This thorny red affair is the Japan quince, but I don't recognize these others."

"That's because you're a city girl! You'll laugh when I tell you what they are."

"They don't look like flowering shrubs to me."

"They aren't. They're flowering trees; fruit trees!"

"O-o! That really is a peach blossom, then!"

"The deep pink is peach, and the delicate pink is apple and the white is plum."

"They're perfectly dear. Tell me how you coaxed them out. Surely you didn't just keep them in water in this room?"

"We put them in the sunniest window we had, not too near the glass, because it wouldn't do for them to run any chance of getting chilled. They stayed there as long as the sun did, and then we moved them to another warm spot and we were very careful about them at night."

"How often do you change the water?"

"Every two or three days; and once in a while we spray them to keep the upper part fresh—and there you are. It's *fun* to watch them come out. Don't you want to take some switches back to town with you?"

Della did.

"They make me think of a scheme that my Aunt Rose is putting into operation. She went round the world year before last," she said, "and she saw in Japan lots of plants growing in earthenware vases hanging against the wall or in a long bamboo cut so that small water bottles might be slipped in. She has some of the very prettiest wall decorations now—a queer looking greeny-brown pottery vase has two or three sprigs of English ivy. Another with orange tints has nasturtiums and another tradescantia."

"Are they growing in water?"

"The ivy and the tradescantia are, but the nasturtiums and a perfectly darling morning glory have

earth. She's growing bulbs in them, too, only she doesn't use plain water or earth, just bulb fibre."

"What's that?"

"Why, bulbs are such fat creatures that they don't need the outside food they would get from earth; all they want is plenty of water. This fibre stuff holds enough water to keep them damp all the time, and it isn't messy in the house like dirt."

"What are you girls talking about?" asked Dorothy, who came in with Ethel Brown at this moment.

Both of them were interested in the addition that Della had made to their knowledge of flowers and gardening.

"Every day I feel myself drawn into more and more gardening," exclaimed Dorothy. "I've set up a notebook already."

"In January!" laughed Della.

"January seems to be the time to do your thinking and planning; that's what the people who know tell me."

"It seems to be the time for some action," retorted Della, waving her hand at the blossoming branches about the room.

"Aren't they wonderful? I always knew you could bring them out quickly in the house after the buds were started out of doors, but these fellows didn't seem to be started at all—and look at them!"

"Mother says they've done so well because we've been careful to keep them evenly warm," said Ethel Brown. "Dorothy's got the finest piece of news to tell you. If she doesn't tell you pretty soon I shall come out with it myself!"

"O, let her tell her own secret!" remonstrated Ethel Blue. "What is it?"

"You know that sloping piece of ground about a quarter of a mile beyond the Clarks' on the road to Mr. Emerson's?"

"You don't mean the field with the brook where Roger got the pussy willows?"

"This side of it. There's a lovely view across the meadows on the other side of the road, and the land runs back to some rocks and big trees."

"Certainly I know it," assented Ethel Blue. "There's a hillock on it that's the place I've chosen for a house when I grow up and build one."

"Well, you can't have it because I've got there first!"

"What do you mean? Has Aunt Louise—?"

"She has."

"How grand! How *grand!* You'll be farther away from us than you are now but it's a dear duck of a spot—"

"And it's right on the way to Grandfather Emerson's," added Ethel Brown.

"Mother signed the papers this morning and she's going to begin to build as soon as the weather will allow."

"With peach trees in blossom now that ought not to be far off," laughed Della, waving her hand again at the blossoms that pleased her so much.

"How large a house is she going to build?" asked Ethel Blue.

"Not very big. Large enough for her and me and a guest or two and of course Elisabeth and Miss

Merriam," referring to a Belgian baby who had been brought to the United Service Club from war-stricken Belgium, and to her caretaker, a charming young woman from the School of Mothercraft.

"Will it be made of concrete?"

"Yes, and Mother says we may all help a lot in making the plans and in deciding on the decoration and everything."

"Isn't she the darling! It will be the next best thing to building a house yourself!"

"There will be a garage behind the house."

"A garage! Is Aunt Louise going to set up a car?"

"Just a small one that she can drive herself. Back of the garage there's plenty of space for a garden and she says she'll turn that over to me. I can do anything I want with it as long as I'll be sure to have enough vegetables for the table and lots of flowers for the house."

"O, my; O, my; what fun we'll have," ejaculated Della, who knew that Dorothy could have no pleasure that she would not share equally with the rest of the Club.

"I came over now to see if you people didn't want to walk over there and see it."

"This minute?"

"This minute."

"Of course we do—if Della doesn't have to take the train back yet?"

"Not for a long time. I'd take a later one anyway; I couldn't wait until the Saturday Club meeting to see it."

"How did you know I'd suggest a walk there for the Saturday Club meeting?"

"Could you help it?" retorted Della, laughing.

They timed themselves so that they might know just how far away from them Dorothy was going to be and they found that it was just about half way to Grandfather Emerson's. As somebody from the Mortons' went there every day, and as the distance was, in reality, not long, they were reassured as to the Smiths being quite out in the country as the change had seemed to them at first.

"You won't be able to live in the house this summer, will you?" asked Ethel Blue.

"Not until late in the summer or perhaps even later than that. Mother says she isn't in a hurry because she wants the work to be done well."

"Then you won't plant the garden this year?"

"Indeed I shall. I'm going to plant the new garden and the garden where we are now."

"Roger will strike on doing all the digging."

"He'll have to have a helper on the new garden, but I'll plant his sweetpeas for him just the same. At the new place I'm going to have a large garden."

"Up here on the hill?"

The girls were climbing up the ascent that rose sharply from the road.

"The house will perch on top of this little hill. Back of it, you see, on top of the ridge, it's quite flat and the garden will be there. I was talking about it with Mr. Emerson this morning—"

"Oho, you've called Grandfather into consultation already!"

"He's going to be our nearest neighbor on that side. He said that a ridge like this was one of the best places for planting because it has several exposures to the sun and you can find a spot to suit the fancy of about every plant there is."

"Your garden will be cut off from the house by the garage. Shall you have another nearer the road?"

"Next summer there will have to be planting of trees and shrubs and vines around the house but this year I shall attend to the one up here in the field."

"Brrrr! It looks bleak enough now," shivered Ethel Blue.

"Let's go up in those woods and see what's there."

"Has Aunt Louise bought them?"

"No, but she wants to. They don't belong to the same man who owned this piece of land. They belong to the Clarks. She's going to see about it right off, because it looks so attractive and rocky and woodsy."

"You'd have the brook, too."

"I hope she'll be able to get it. Of course just this piece is awfully pretty, and this is the only place for a house, but the meadow with the brook and the rocks and the woods at the back would be too lovely for words. Why, you'd feel as if you had an estate."

The girls laughed at Dorothy's enthusiasm over the small number of acres that were included even in the combined lots of land, but they agreed with her that the additional land offered a variety that was worth working hard to obtain.

They made their way up the slope and among the

jumble of rocks that looked as if giants had been tossing them about in sport. Small trees grew from between them as they lay heaped in disorder and taller growths stretched skyward from an occasional open space. The brook began in a spring that bubbled clear and cold, from under a slab of rock. Round about it all was covered with moss, still green, though frozen stiff by the snowstorm's chilly blasts. Shrivelled ferns bending over its mouth promised summer beauties.

"What a lovely spot!" cried Ethel Blue. "This is where fairies and wood nymphs live when that drift melts. Don't you know this must be a great gathering place for birds? Can't you see them now dipping their beaks into the water and cocking their heads up at the sky afterwards!" and she quoted:—

> "Dip, birds, dip
> Where the ferns lean over,
> And their crinkled edges drip,
> Haunt and hover."

"Here's the best place yet!" called Dorothy, who had pushed on and was now out of sight.

"Where are you?"

"Here. See if you can find me," came a muffled answer.

"Where do you suppose she went to?" asked Ethel Brown, as they all three straightened themselves, yet saw no sign of Dorothy.

"I hope she hasn't fallen down a precipice and been killed!" said Ethel Blue, whose imagination sometimes ran away with her.

"More likely she has twisted her ankle," said practical Ethel Brown.

"She wouldn't sound as gay as that if anything had happened to her," Della reminded them.

The cries that kept reaching them were unquestionably cheerful but where they came from was a problem that they did not seem able to solve. It was only when Dorothy poked out her head from behind a rock almost in front of them that they saw the entrance of what looked like a real cave.

"It's the best imitation of a cave I ever did see!" the explorer exclaimed. "These rocks have tumbled into just the right position to make the very best house! Come in."

Her guests were eager to accept her invitation. There was space enough for all of them and two or three more might easily be accommodated within, while a bit of smooth grass outside the entrance almost added another room, "if you aren't particular about a roof," as Ethel Brown said.

"Do you suppose Roger has never found this!" wondered Dorothy. "See, there's room enough for a fireplace with a chimney. You could cook here. You could sleep here. You could *live* here!"

The others laughed at her enthusiasm, but they themselves were just as enthusiastic. The possibilities of spending whole days here in the shade and cool of the trees and rocks and of imagining that they were in the highlands of Scotland left them almost gasping.

"Don't you remember when Fitz-James first sees

Ellen in the 'Lady of the Lake'?" asked Ethel Blue. "He was separated from his men and found himself in a rocky glen overlooking a lake. The rocks were bigger than these but we can pretend they were just the same," and she recited a few lines from a poem whose story they all knew and loved.

> "But not a setting beam could glow
> Within the dark ravines below,
> Where twined the path in shadow hid,
> Round many a rocky pyramid."

"I remember; he looked at the view a long time and then he blew his horn again to see if he could make any of his men hear him, and Ellen came gliding around a point of land in a skiff. She thought it was her father calling her."

"And the stranger went home to their lodge and fell in love with her—O, it's awfully romantic. I must read it again," and Dorothy gazed at the rocks around her as if she were really in Scotland.

"Has anybody a knife?" asked Della's clear voice, bringing them all sharply back to America and Rosemont. "My aunt—the one who has the hanging flowerpots I was telling you about—isn't a bit well and I thought I'd make her a little fernery that she could look at as she lies in bed."

"But the ferns are all dried up."

"'Greenery' is a better name. Here's a scrap of partridge berry with a red berry still clinging to it, and here's a bit of moss as green as it was in summer, and here—yes, it's alive, it really is!" and she held up in triumph a tiny fern that had been so

sheltered under the edge of a boulder that it had kept fresh and happy.

There was nothing more to reward their search, for they all hunted with Della, but she was not discouraged.

Partridge Berry

"I only want a handful of growing things," she explained. "I put these in a finger bowl, and sprinkle a few seeds of grass or canary seed on the moss and dash some water on it from the tips of my fingers. Another finger bowl upside down makes the cover. The sick person can see what is going on inside right through the glass without having to raise her head."

"How often do you water it?"

"Only once or twice a week, because the moisture collects on the upper glass of the little greenhouse and falls down again on the plants and keeps them wet."

"We'll keep our eyes open every time we come here," promised Dorothy. "There's no reason why you couldn't add a little root of this or that any time you want to."

"I know Aunty will be delighted with it," cried Della, much pleased. "She likes all plants, but especially things that are a little bit different. That's why she spends so much time selecting her wall vases—so that they shall be unlike other people's."

"Fitz-James's woods," as they already called the bit of forest that Dorothy hoped to have possession of, extended back from the road and spread until it joined Grandfather Emerson's woods on one side and what was called by the Rosemonters "the West Woods" on the other. The girls walked home by a path that took them into Rosemont not far from the station where Della was to take the train.

"Until you notice what there really is in the woods in winter you think there isn't anything worth looking at," said Ethel Blue, walking along with her eyes in the tree crowns.

"The shapes of the different trees are as distinct now as they are in summer," declared Ethel Brown. "You'd know that one was an oak, and the one next to it a beech, wouldn't you?"

"I don't know whether I would or not," confessed Dorothy honestly, "but I can almost always tell a tree by its bark."

"I can tell a chestnut by its bark nowadays," asserted Ethel Blue, "because it hasn't any!"

"What on earth do you mean?" inquired city-bred Della.

"Something or other has killed all the chestnuts in this part of the world in the last two or three years. Don't you see all these dead trees standing with bare trunks?"

"Poor old things! Is it going to last?"

"It spread up the Hudson and east and west in New York and Massachusetts, and south into Pennsylvania."

"Roger was telling Grandfather a few days ago that a farmer was telling him that he thought the trouble—the pest or the blight or whatever it was—had been stopped."

"I remember now seeing a lot of dead trees somewhere when one of Father's parishioners took us motoring in the autumn. I didn't know the chestnut crop was threatened."

"Chestnuts weren't any more expensive this year. They must have imported them from far-off states."

There were still pools of water in the wood path, left by the melting snow, and the grass that they touched seemed a trifle greener than that beside the narrow road. Once in a while a bit of vivid green betrayed a plant that had found shelter under an overhanging stone. The leaves were for the most part dry enough again to rustle under their feet. Evergreens stood out sharply dark against the leafless trees.

"What are the trees that still have a few leaves left clinging to them?" asked Della.

"Oaks. Do you know why the leaves stay on?"

"Is it a story?"

"Yes, a pleasant story. Once the Great Evil Spirit threatened to destroy the whole world. The trees heard the threat and the oak tree begged him not to do anything so wicked. He insisted but at last he agreed not to do it until the last leaf had

fallen in the autumn. All the trees meant to hold on to their leaves so as to ward off the awful disaster, but one after the other they let them go—all except the oak. The oak never yet has let fall every one of its leaves and so the Evil Spirit never has had a chance to put his threat into execution."

"That's a lesson in success, isn't it? Stick to whatever it is you want to do and you're sure to succeed."

"Watch me make my garden succeed," cried Dorothy. "If 'sticking' will make it a success I'm a stick!"

CHAPTER IV

GARDENING ON PAPER

WHEN Saturday came and the United Service Club tramped over Dorothy's new domain, including the domain that she hoped to have but was not yet sure of, every member agreed that the prospect was one that gave satisfaction to the Club as well as the possibility of pleasure and comfort to Mrs. Smith and Dorothy. The knoll they hailed as the exact spot where a house should go; the ridge behind it as precisely suited to the needs of a garden.

As to the region of the meadow and the brook and the rocks and the trees they all hoped most earnestly that Mrs. Smith would be able to buy it, for they foresaw that it would provide much amusement for all of them during the coming summer and many to follow.

Strangely enough Roger had never found the cave, and he looked on it with yearning.

"Why in the world didn't I know of that three or four years ago!" he exclaimed. "I should have lived out here all summer!"

"That's what we'd like to do," replied the Ethels earnestly. "We'll let you come whenever you want to."

Roger gave a sniff, but the girls knew from his longing gaze that he was quite as eager as they to

fit it up for a day camp even if he was nearly eighteen and going to college next autumn.

When the exploring tour was over they gathered in their usual meeting place—Dorothy's attic—and discussed the gardens which had taken so firm a hold on the girls' imaginations.

"There'll be a small garden in our back yard as usual," said Roger in a tone that admitted of no dispute.

"And a small one in Dorothy's present back yard and a LARGE one on Miss Smith's farm," added Tom, who had confirmed with his own eyes the glowing tales that Della had brought home to him.

"I suppose we may all have a chance at all of these institutions?" demanded James.

"Your mother may have something to say about your attentions to your own garden," suggested Helen pointedly.

"I won't slight it, but I've really got to have a finger in this pie if all of you are going to work at it!"

"Well, you shall. Calm yourself," and Roger patted him with a soothing hand. "You may do all the digging I promised the girls I'd do."

A howl of laughter at James's expense made the attic ring.

James appeared quite undisturbed.

"I'm ready to do my share," he insisted placidly. "Why don't we make plans of the gardens now?"

"Methodical old James always has a good idea," commended Tom. "Is there any brown paper around these precincts, Dorothy?"

"Must it be brown?"

"Any color, but big sheets."

"I see. There is plenty," and she spread it on the table where James had done so much pasting when they were making boxes in which to pack their presents for the war orphans.

"Now, then, Roger, the first thing for us to do is to see—"

"With our mind's eye, Horatio?"

"—how these gardens are going to look. Take your pencil in hand and draw us a sketch of your backyard as it is now, old man."

"That's easy," commented Roger. "Here are the kitchen steps; and here is the drying green, and back of that is the vegetable garden and around it flower beds and more over here next the fence."

"It's rather messy looking as it is," commented Ethel Brown. "We never have changed it from the way the previous tenant laid it out."

"The drying green isn't half large enough for the washing for our big family," added Helen appraisingly. "Mary is always lamenting that she can hang out only a few lines-ful at a time."

"Why don't you give her this space behind the green and limit your flower beds to the fence line?" asked Tom, looking over Roger's shoulder as he drew in the present arrangement with some attention to the comparative sizes.

"That would mean cutting out some of the present beds."

"It would, but you'll have a share in Dorothy's new garden in case Mrs. Morton needs more flowers

for the house; and the arrangement I suggest makes the yard look much more shipshape."

"If we sod down these beds here what will Roger do for his sweetpeas? They ought to have the sun on both sides; the fence line wouldn't be the best place for them."

"Sweetpeas ought to be planted on chicken wire supported by stakes and running from east to west," said Margaret wisely, "but under the circumstances, I don't see why you couldn't fence in the vegetable garden with sweetpeas. That would give you two east and west lines of them and two north and south."

"And there would be space for all the blossoms that Roger would want to pick on a summer's day," laughed Della.

"I've always wanted to have a garden of all pink flowers," announced Dorothy. "My room in the new house is going to be pink and I'd like to keep pink flowers in it all the time."

"I've always wanted to do that, too. Let's try one here," urged Ethel Brown, nodding earnestly at Ethel Blue.

"I don't see why we couldn't have a pink bed and a blue bed and a yellow bed," returned Ethel Blue whose inner eye saw the plants already well grown and blossoming.

"A wild flower bed is what I'd like," contributed Helen.

"We mustn't forget to leave a space for Dicky," suggested Roger.

"I want the garden I had latht year," insisted a

decisive voice that preceded the tramp of determined feet over the attic stairs.

"Where was it, son? I've forgotten."

"In a corner of your vegetable garden. Don't you remember my raditheth were ripe before yourth were? Mother gave me a prithe for the firtht vegetableth out of the garden."

"So she did. You beat me to it. Well, you may have the same corner again."

"We ought to have some tall plants, hollyhocks or something like that, to cover the back fence," said Ethel Brown.

"What do you say if we divide the border along the fence into four parts and have a wild garden and pink and yellow and blue beds? Then we can transplant any plants we have now that ought to go in some other color bed, and we can have the tall plants at the back of the right colors to match the bed in front of them?"

"There can be pink hollyhocks at the back of the pink bed and we already have pinks and bleeding heart and a pink peony. We've got a good start at a pink bed already," beamed Ethel Brown.

"We can put golden glow or that tall yellow snapdragon at the back of the yellow bed and tall larkspurs behind the blue flowers."

"The Miss Clarks have a pretty border of dwarf ageratum—that bunchy, fuzzy blue flower. Let's have that for the border of our blue bed."

"I remember it; it's as pretty as pretty. They have a dwarf marigold that we could use for the yellow border."

"Or dwarf yellow nasturtiums."

"Or yellow pansies."

"We had a yellow stock last summer that was pretty and blossomed forever; nothing seemed to stop it but the 'chill blasts of winter.' "

"Even the short stocks are too tall for a really flat border that would match the others. We must have some 'ten week stocks' in the yellow border, though."

"Whatever we plant for the summer yellow border we must have the yellow spring bulbs right behind it—jonquils and daffodils and yellow tulips and crocuses."

"They're all together now. All we'll have to do will be to select the spot for our yellow bed."

"That's settled then. Mark it on this plan."

Roger held it out to Ethel Brown, who found the right place and indicated the probable length of the yellow bed upon it.

"We'll have the wild garden on one side of the yellow bed and the blue on the other and the pink next the blue," decreed Ethel Blue.

"We haven't decided on the pink border," Dorothy reminded them.

"There's a dwarf pink candytuft that couldn't be beaten for the purpose," said James decisively. "Mother and I planted some last year to see what it was like and it proved to be exactly what you want here."

"I know what I'd like to have for the wild border —either wild ginger or hepatica," announced Helen after some thought.

"I don't know either of them," confessed Tom.

"You will after you've tramped the Rosemont woods with the U. S. C. all this spring," promised Ethel Brown. "They have leaves that aren't unlike in shape—"

Wild Ginger

"The ginger is heart-shaped," interposed Ethel Blue, "and the hepatica is supposed to be liver-shaped."

"You have to know some physiology to recognize them," said James gravely. "There's where a doctor's son has the advantage," and he patted his chest.

"Their leaves seem much too juicy to be evergreen, but the hepatica does stay green all winter."

"The ginger would make the better edging," Helen decided, "because the leaves lie closer to the ground."

"What are the blossoms?"

"The ginger has such a wee flower hiding under the leaves that it doesn't count, but the hepatica has a beautiful little blue or purple flower at the top of a hairy scape."

"A hairy what?" laughed Roger.

"A scape is a stem that grows up right from the bulb or root-stock and carries only a flower—not any leaves," defined Helen.

"That's a new one on me. I always thought a stem was a stem, whatever it carried," said Roger.

Hepatica

"And a scape was a 'grace' or a 'goat' according to its activities," concluded Tom.

"The hepatica would make a border that you wouldn't have to renew all the time," contributed Dorothy, who had been thinking so deeply that she had not heard a word of this interchange, and looked up, wondering why every one was laughing.

"Dorothy keeps her eye on the ball," complimented James. "Have we decided on the background flowers for the wild bed?"

"Joe-Pye-Weed is tall enough," offered James. "It's way up over my head."

"It wouldn't cover the fence much; the blossom is handsome but the foliage is scanty."

"There's a feathery meadow-rue that is tall. The leaves are delicate."

"I know it; it has a fine white blossom and it grows in damp places. That will be just right. Aren't you going to have trouble with these wild plants that like different kinds of ground?"

"Perhaps we are," Helen admitted. "Our garden is 'middling' dry, but we can keep the wet lovers moist by watering them more generously than the rest."

"How about the watering systems of all these gardens, anyway? You have town water here and at Dorothy's, but how about the new place?"

"The town water runs out as far as Mr. Emerson's, luckily for us, and Mother says she'll have the connection made as soon as the frost is out of the ground so the builders may have all they want for their work and I can have all I need for the garden there."

"If you get that next field with the brook and you want to plant anything there you'll have to dig some ditches for drainage."

"I think I'll keep up on the ridge that's drained by nature."

"That's settled, then. We can't do much planning about the new garden until we go out in a body and make our decisions on the spot," said Margaret. "We'll have to put in vegetables and flowers where they'd rather grow."

"That's what we're trying to do here, only it's

on a small scale," Roger reminded her. "Our whole garden is about a twentieth of the new one."

"I shouldn't wonder if we had to have some expert help with that," guessed James, who had gardened enough at Glen Point not to be ashamed to confess ignorance now and then.

"Mr. Emerson has promised to talk it all over with me," said Dorothy.

"Let's see what there is at Dorothy's present abode, then," said Roger gayly, and he took another sheet of brown paper and began to place on it the position of the house and the existing borders. "Do I understand, madam, that you're going to have a pink border here?"

"I am," replied his cousin firmly, "both here and at the new place."

"Life will take on a rosy hue for these young people if they can make it," commented Della. "Pink flowers, a pink room—is there anything else pink?"

"The name. Mother and I have decided on 'Sweetbrier Lodge.' Don't you think it's pretty?"

"Dandy," approved Roger concisely, as he continued to draw. "Do you want to change any of the beds that were here last summer?" he asked.

"Mother said she liked their positions very well. This long, narrow one in front of the house is to be the pink one. I've got pink tulip bulbs in the ground now and there are some pink flowering shrubs—weigelia and flowering almond—already there against the lattice of the veranda. I'm going to work out a list of plants that will keep a pink bed

blossoming all summer and we can use it in three places," and she nodded dreamily to her cousins.

"We'll do that, but I think it would be fun if each one of us tried out a new plant of some kind. Then we can find out which are most suitable for our needs next year. We can report on them to the Club when they come into bloom. It will save a lot of trouble if we tell what we've found out about what some plant likes in the way of soil and position and water and whether it is best to cut it back or to let it bloom all it wants to, and so on."

"That's a good idea. I hope Secretary Ethel Blue is taking notes of all these suggestions," remarked Helen, who was the president of the Club.

Ethel Blue said she was, and Roger complimented her faithfulness in terms of extravagant absurdity.

"Your present lot of land has the best looking fencing in Rosemont, to my way of thinking," approved Tom.

"What is it? I hardly remember myself," said Dorothy thoughtfully.

"Why, across the front there's a privet hedge, clipped low enough for your pink garden to be seen over it; and separating you from the Clarks' is a row of tall, thick hydrangea bushes that are beauties as long as there are any leaves on them; and at the back there is osage orange to shut out that old dump; and on the other side is a row of small blue spruces."

"That's quite a showing of hedges all in one yard." exclaimed Ethel Blue admiringly. "And I never noticed them at all!"

"At the new place Mother wants to try a barberry hedge. It doesn't grow regularly, but each bush is handsome in itself because the branches droop gracefully, and the leaves are a good green and the clusters of red berries are striking."

"The leaves turn red in the autumn and the whole effect is stunning," contributed Della. "I saw one once in New England. They aren't usual about here, and I should think it would be a beauty."

"You can let it grow as tall as you like," said James. "Your house is going to be above it on the knoll and look right over it, so you don't need a low hedge or even a clipped one."

"At the side and anywhere else where she thinks there ought to be a real fence she's going to put honey locust."

They all laughed.

"That spiny affair *will* be discouraging to visitors!" Helen exclaimed. "Why don't you try hedges of gooseberries and currants and raspberries and blackberries around your garden?"

"That would be killing two birds with one stone, wouldn't it!"

"You'll have a real problem in landscape gardening over there," said Margaret.

"The architect of the house will help on that. That is, he and Mother will decide exactly where the house is to be placed and how the driveway is to run."

"There ought to be some shrubs climbing up the knoll," advised Ethel Brown. "They'll look well below the house and they'll keep the bank from

washing. I noticed this afternoon that the rains had been rather hard on it."

"There are a lot of lovely shrubs you can put in just as soon as you're sure the workmen won't tramp them all down," cried Ethel Blue eagerly. "That's one thing I do know about because I went with Aunt Marion last year when she ordered some new bushes for our front yard."

"Recite your lesson, kid," commanded Roger briefly.

"There is the weigelia that Dorothy has in front of this house; and forsythia—we forced its yellow blossoms last week, you know; and the flowering almond—that has whitey-pinky-buttony blossoms."

They laughed at Ethel's description, but they listened attentively while she described the spiky white blossoms of deutzia and the winding white bands of the spiræa—bridal wreath.

"I can see that bank with those white shrubs all in blossom, leaning toward the road and beckoning you in," Ethel ended enthusiastically.

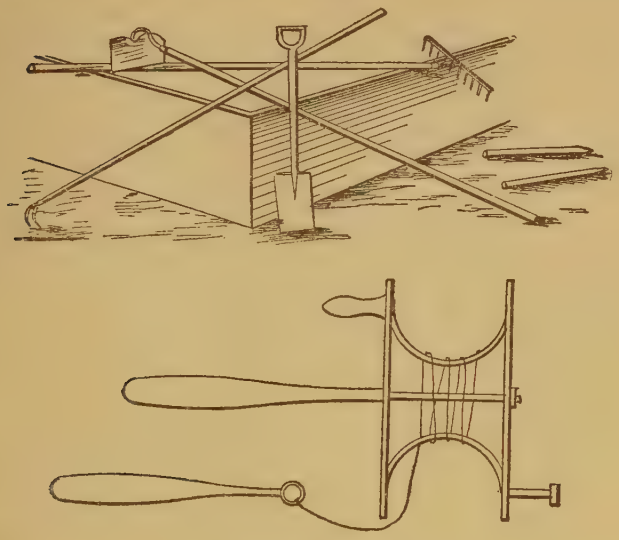
"I seem to see them myself," remarked Tom, "and Dorothy can be sure that they won't beckon in vain."

"You'll all be as welcome as daylight," cried Dorothy.

"I hate to say anything that sounds like putting a damper on this outburst of imagination that Ethel Blue has just treated us to, but I'd like to inquire of Miss Smith whether she has any gardening tools," said Roger, bringing them all to the ground with a bump.

"Miss Smith hasn't one," returned Dorothy, laughing. "You forget that we only moved in here last September and there hasn't been need for any that we couldn't borrow of you."

"You're perfectly welcome to them," answered Roger, "but if we're all going to do the gardening



Gardening Tools

act there'll be a scarcity if we don't add to the number."

"What do we need?"

"A rake and a hoe and a claw and a trowel and a spade and a heavy line with some pegs to do marking with."

"We've found that it's a comfort to your back to have another claw mounted on the end of a handle as long as a hoe," contributed Margaret.

"Two claws," Dorothy amended her list. "That isn't many."

"And a lot of dibbles."

"Dibbles!"

"Short flat sticks whittled to a point. You use them when you're changing little plants from the pots to the hot bed or the hot bed to the garden."

"Mother and I ought to have one set of tools here and one set at Sweetbrier Lodge," decided Dorothy.

"We keep ours in the shed. I'm going to whitewash the corner where they belong and make it look as fine as a fiddle before the time comes to use them."

"We have a shed here where we can keep them, but at Sweetbrier there isn't anything," and Dorothy's mouth dropped anxiously.

"We can build you a tool house," Tom was offering when James interrupted him.

"If we can get a piano box there's your tool-house all made," he suggested. "Cover it with tar paper so the rain won't come in, and hang the front on hinges with a hasp and staple and padlock, and what better would you want?"

"Nothing," answered Ethel Brown, seriously. Ethel Blue noted it down in her book and Roger promised to visit the local piano man and see what he could find.

"We haven't finished deciding how we shall plant Dorothy's yard behind this house," Margaret reminded them.

"We shan't attempt a vegetable garden here," Dorothy said. "We'll start one at the other place

so that the soil will be in good condition next year. We'll have a man to do the heavy work of the two places, and he can bring over every morning whatever vegetables are ready for the day's use."

"You want more flowers in this yard, then?"

"You'll laugh at what I want!"

"Don't you forget what you promithed me," piped up Dicky.

"That's what I was going to tell them now. I've promised Dicky to plant a lot of sunflowers for his hens. He says Roger never has had space to plant enough for him."

"True enough. Give him a big bed of them so he can have all the seeds he wants."

"I'd like to have a wide strip across the back of the whole place, right in front of the osage orange hedge. They'll cover the lower part that's rather scraggly—then everywhere else I want nasturtiums, climbing and dwarf and every color under the sun."

"That's a good choice for your yard because it's awfully stony and nasturtiums don't mind a little thing like that."

"Then I want gourds over the trellis at the back door."

"Gourds!"

"I saw them so much in the South that I want to try them. There's one shape that makes a splendid dipper when it's dried and you cut a hole in it; and there's another kind just the size of a hen's egg that I want for nest eggs for Dicky's hens; and there's the loofa full of fibre that you can use for a bath sponge; and there's a pear-shaped one striped green

and yellow that Mother likes for a darning ball; and there's a sweet smelling one that is as fragrant as possible in your handkerchief case. There are some as big as buckets and some like base ball bats, but I don't care for those."

"What a collection," applauded Ethel Brown.

"Beside that my idea of Japanese morning glories and a hop vine for our kitchen regions has no value at all," smiled Helen.

"I'm going to have hops wherever the vines can find a place to climb at Sweetbrier," Dorothy determined. "I love a hop vine, and it grows on forever."

"James and I seem to be in the same condition. If we don't start home we'll go on talking forever," Margaret complained humorously.

"There's to be hot chocolate for us down stairs at half past four," said Dorothy, jumping up and looking at a clock that was ticking industriously on a shelf. "Let's go down and get it, and we'll ask Mother to sing the funny old song of 'The Four Seasons' for us."

"Why is it funny?" asked Ethel Blue.

"It's a very old English song with queer spelling."

"Something like mine?" demanded Della.

Ethel Blue kissed her.

"Never mind; Shakspere spelled his name in several different ways," she said encouragingly. "Anyway, we can't tell how this is spelled when Aunt Louise sings it."

As they sat about the fire in the twilight drinking their chocolate and eating sandwiches made of nuts

ground fine, mixed with mayonnaise and put on a crisp lettuce leaf between slices of whole wheat bread, Mrs. Smith sang the old English song to them.

"Springe is ycomen in,
Dappled lark singe;
Snow melteth,
Runnell pelteth,
Smelleth winde of newe buddinge.

"Summer is ycomen in,
Loude singe cucku;
Groweth seede,
Bloweth meade,
And springeth the weede newe.

"Autumne is ycomen in,
Ceres filleth horne;
Reaper swinketh,
Farmer drinketh,
Creaketh waine with newe corn.

"Winter is ycomen in,
With stormy sadde cheere;
In the paddocke,
Whistle ruddock,
Brighte sparke in the dead yeare."

"That's a good stanza to end with," said Ethel Blue, as she bade her aunt "Good-bye." "We've been talking about gardens and plants and flowers all the afternoon, and it would have seemed queer to put on a heavy coat to go home in if you hadn't said 'Winter is ycomen in.'"

CHAPTER V

A DEFECT IN THE TITLE

IN spite of their having made such an early start in talking about gardens the members of the United Service Club did not weary of the idea or cease to plan for what they were going to do. The only drawback that they found in gardening as a Club activity was that the gardens were for themselves and their families and they did not see exactly how there was any "service" in them.

"I'll trust you youngsters to do some good work for somebody in connection with them," asserted Grandfather Emerson one day when Roger had been talking over with him his pet plan for remodelling the old Emerson farmhouse into a place suitable for the summer shelter of poor women and children from the city who needed country air and relief from hunger and anxiety.

"We aren't rushing anything now," Roger had explained, "because we boys are all going to graduate this June and we have our examinations to think about. They must come first with us. But later on we'll be ready for work of some sort and we haven't anything on the carpet except our gardens."

"There are many good works to be done with the help of a garden," replied Mr. Emerson. "Ask

your grandmother to tell you how she has sent flowers into New York for the poor for many, many summers. There are people right here in Rosemont who haven't enough ground to raise any vegetables on and they are glad to have fresh corn and Brussels sprouts sent to them. If you really do undertake this farmhouse scheme there'll have to be a large vegetable garden planted near the house to supply it, and you can add a few flower beds. The old place will look better flower-dressed than empty, and perhaps some of the women and children will like to work in the garden."

Roger went home comforted, for he was very loyal to the Club and its work and he did not want to become so involved with other matters that he could not give himself to the purpose for which the Club was organized—helping others.

As he passed the Miss Clarks he stopped to give their furnace its nightly shaking, for he was the accredited furnace man for them and his Aunt Louise as well as for his mother. He added the money that he earned to the treasury of the Club so that there might always be enough there to do a kind act whenever there should be a chance.

As he labored with the shaker and the noise of his struggles was sent upward through the registers a voice called to him down the cellar stairs.

"Ro-ger; Roger!"

"Yes, ma'am," replied Roger, wishing the old ladies would let him alone until he had finished his work.

"Come up here, please, when you've done."

"Very well," he agreed, and went on with his racket.

When he went upstairs he found that the cause of his summons was the arrival of a young man who was apparently about the age of Edward Watkins, the doctor brother of Tom and Della.

"My nephew is a law student," said Miss Clark as she introduced the two young people, "and I want him to know all of our neighbors."

"My name is Stanley Clark," said the newcomer, shaking hands cordially. "I'm going to be here for a long time so I hope I'll see you often."

Roger liked him at once and thought his manner particularly pleasant in view of the fact that he was several years older. Roger was so accustomed to the companionship of Edward Watkins, who frequently joined the Club in their festivities and who often came to Rosemont to call on Miss Merriam, that the difference did not seem to him a cause of embarrassment. He was unusually easy for a boy of his age because he had always been accustomed to take his sailor father's place at home in the entertainment of his mother's guests.

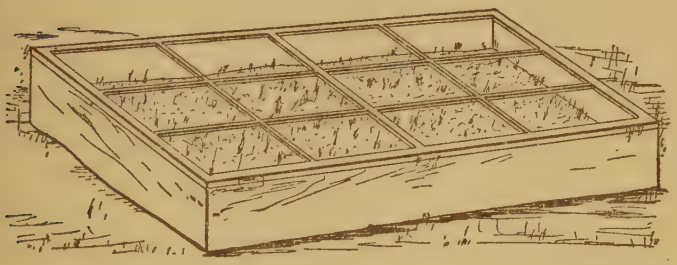
Young Clark, on his side, found his new acquaintance a boy worth talking to, and they got on well. He was studying at a law school in the city, it seemed, and commuted every day.

"It's a long ride," he agreed when Roger suggested it, "but when I get home I have the good country air to breathe and I'd rather have that than town amusements just now when I'm working hard."

Roger spoke of Edward Watkins and Stanley was

interested in the possibility of meeting him. Evidently his aunts had told him all about the Belgian baby and Miss Merriam, for he said Elisabeth would be the nearest approach to a soldier from a Belgian battlefield that he had seen.

Roger left with the feeling that his new acquaintance would be a desirable addition to the neighborhood group and he was so pleased that he stopped in at his Aunt Louise's not only to shake the furnace but to tell her about Stanley Clark.



The Hot Bed

During the next month they all came to know him well and they liked his cheerfulness and his interest in what they were doing and planning. On Saturdays he helped Roger build a hot bed in the sunniest spot against the side of the kitchen ell. They found that the frost had not stiffened the ground after they managed to dig down a foot, so that the excavation was not as hard as they had expected. They dug a hole the size of two window sashes and four feet deep, lining the sides with some old bricks that they found in the cellar. At first they filled the entire bed with fresh stable manure and straw. After it

had stayed under the glass two days it was quite hot and they beat it down a foot and put on six inches of soil made one-half of compost and one-half of leaf mould that they found in a sheltered corner of the West Woods.

"Grandfather didn't believe we could manage to get good soil at this season even if we did succeed in digging the hole, but when I make up my mind to do a thing I like to succeed," said Roger triumphantly when they had fitted the sashes on to planks that sloped at the sides so that rain would run off the glass, and called the girls out to admire their result.

"What are we going to put in here first?" asked Ethel Brown, who liked to get at the practical side of matters at once.

"I'd like to have some violets," said Ethel Blue. "Could I have a corner for them? I've had some plants promised me from the Glen Point greenhouse man. Margaret is going to bring them over as soon as I'm ready for them."

"I want to see if I can beat Dicky with early vegetables," declared Roger. "I'm going to start early parsley and cabbage and lettuce, cauliflower and egg plants, radishes and peas and corn in shallow boxes —flats Grandfather says they're called—in my room and the kitchen where it's warm and sunny, and when they've sprouted three leaves I'll set them out here and plant some more in the flats."

"Won't transplanting them twice set them back?"

"If you take up enough earth around them they ought not to know that they've taken a journey."

"I've done a lot of transplanting of wild plants from the woods," said Stanley, "and I found that if I was careful to do that they didn't even wilt."

"Why can't we start some of the flower seeds here and have early blossoms?"

"You can. I don't see why we can't keep it going all the time and have a constant supply of flowers and vegetables earlier than we should if we trusted to Mother Nature to do the work unaided."

"Then in the autumn we can stow away here some of the plants we want to save, geraniums and begonias, and plants that are pretty indoors, and take them into the house when the indoor ones become shabby."

"Evidently right in the heart of summer is the only time this article won't be in use," decided Stanley, laughing at their eagerness. "Have you got anything to cover it with when the spring sunshine grows too hot?"

"There is an old hemp rug and some straw matting in the attic—won't they do?"

"Perfectly. Lay them over the glass so that the delicate little plants won't get burned. You can raise the sashes, too."

"If we don't forget to close them before the sun sets and the night chill comes on, I suppose," smiled Ethel Blue. "Mr. Emerson says that seeds under glass do better if they're covered with newspaper until they start.

It was about the middle of March when Mrs. Smith went in to call on her neighbors, the Miss Clarks, one evening. They were at home and after

a talk on the ever-absorbing theme of the war Mrs. Smith said,

"I really came in here on business. I hope you've decided to sell me the meadow lot next to my knoll. If you've made up your minds hadn't I better tell my lawyer to make out the papers at once?"

"Sister and I made up our minds some time ago, dear Mrs. Smith, and we wrote to Brother William about it before he came to stay with us, and he was willing, and Stanley, here, who is the only other heir of the estate that we know about, has no objection."

"That gives me the greatest pleasure. I'll tell my lawyer, then, to have the title looked up right away and make out the deed—though I feel as if I should apologize for looking up the title of land that has been in your family as long as Mr. Emerson's has been in his."

"You needn't feel at all apologetic," broke in Stanley. "It's never safe to buy property without having a clear title, and we aren't sure that we are in a position to give you a clear title."

"That's why we haven't spoken to you about it before," said the elder Miss Clark; "we were waiting to try to make it all straight before we said anything about it one way or the other."

"Not give me a clear title!" cried Mrs. Smith. "Do you mean that I won't be able to buy it? Why, I don't know what Dorothy will do if we can't get that bit with the brook; she has set her heart on it."

"We want you to have it not only for Dorothy's sake but for our own. It isn't a good building lot—

it's too damp—and we're lucky to have an offer for it."

"Can you tell me just what the trouble is? It seems as if it ought to be straight since all of you heirs agree to the sale."

"The difficulty is," said Stanley, "that we aren't sure that we are all the heirs. We thought we were, but Uncle William made some inquiries on his way here, and he learned enough to disquiet him."

"Our father, John Clark, had a sister Judith," explained the younger Miss Clark. "They lived here on the Clark estate which had belonged to the family for many generations. Then Judith married a man named Leonard—Peter Leonard—and went to Nebraska at a time when Nebraska was harder to reach than California is now. That was long before the Civil War and during those frontier days Aunt Judith and Uncle Peter evidently were tossed about to the limit of their endurance. Her letters came less and less often and they always told of some new grief—the death of a child or the loss of some piece of property. Finally the letters ceased altogether. I don't understand why her family didn't hold her more closely, but they lost sight of her entirely."

"Probably it was more her fault than theirs," replied Mrs. Smith softly, recalling that there had been a time when her own pride had forbade her letting her people know that she was in dire distress.

"It doesn't make much difference to-day whose fault it was," declared Stanley Clark cheerfully; "the part of the story that interests us is that the family thought that all Great-aunt Judith's children were

dead. Here is where Uncle William got his surprise. When he was coming on from Arkansas he stopped over for a day at the town where Aunt Judith had posted her last letter to Grandfather, about sixty years ago. There he learned from the records that she was dead and all her children were dead—*except one.*"

"Except one!" repeated Mrs. Smith. "Born after she ceased writing home?"

"Exactly. Now this daughter—Emily was her name—left the town after her parents died and there is no way of finding out where she went. One or two of the old people remember that the Leonard girl left, but nothing more."

"She may be living now."

"Certainly she may; and she may have married and had a dozen children. You see, until we can find out something about this Emily we can't give a clear title to the land."

Mrs. Smith nodded her understanding.

"It's lucky we've never been willing to sell any of the old estate," said Mr. William Clark, who had entered and been listening to the story. "If we had we should, quite ignorantly, have given a defective title."

"Isn't it possible, after making as long and thorough a search as you can, to take the case into court and have the judge declare the title you give to be valid, under the circumstances?"

"That is done; but you can see that such a decision would be granted only after long research on our part. It would delay your purchase considerably."

"However, it seems to me the thing to do," decided Mrs. Smith, and she and Stanley at once entered upon a discussion of the ways and means by which the hunt for Emily Leonard and her heirs was to be accomplished. It included the employment of detectives for the spring months, and then, if they had not met with success, a journey by Stanley during the weeks of his summer vacation.

Dorothy and Ethel were bitterly disappointed at the result of Mrs. Smith's attempt to purchase the coveted bit of land.

"I suppose it wouldn't have any value for any one else on earth," cried Dorothy, "but I want it."

"I don't think I ever saw a spot that suited me so well for a summer play place," agreed Ethel Blue, and Helen and Roger and all the rest of the Club members were of the same opinion.

"The Clarks will be putting the price up if they should find out that we wanted it so much," warned Roger.

"I don't believe they would," smiled Mrs. Smith. "They said they thought themselves lucky to have a customer for it, because it isn't good for building ground."

"We'll hope that Stanley will unearth the history of his great-aunt," said Roger seriously.

"And find that she died a spinster," smiled his Aunt Louise. "The fewer heirs there are to deal with the simpler it will be."

CHAPTER VI

WILD FLOWERS FOR HELEN'S GARDEN

ROGER had a fair crop of lettuce in one of his flats by the middle of March and transplanted the tiny, vivid green leaves to the hotbed without doing them any harm. The celery and tomato seeds that he had planted during the first week of the month were showing their heads bravely and the cabbage and cauliflower seedlings had gone to keep the lettuce company in the hotbed. On every warm day he opened the sashes and let the air circulate among the young plants.

"Wordsworth says

> 'It is my faith that every flower
> Enjoys the air it breathes,'

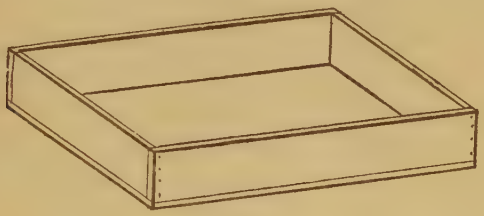
and I suppose that's true of vegetables, too," laughed Roger.

The girls, meanwhile, had been planting the seeds of Canterbury bells and foxgloves in flats. They did not put in many of them because they learned that they would not blossom until the second year. The flats they made from boxes that had held tomato cans. Roger sawed through the sides and they used the cover for the bottom of the second flat.

The dahlias they provided with pots, joking at

the exclusiveness of this gorgeous flower which likes to have a separate house for each of its seeds. These were to be transferred to the garden about the middle of May together with the roots of last year's dahlias which they were going to sprout in a box of sand for about a month before allowing them to renew their acquaintance with the flower bed.

By the middle of April they had planted a variety of seeds and were watching the growth or awaiting



A Flat

the germination of gay cosmos, shy four o'clocks, brilliant marigolds, varied petunias and stocks, smoke-blue ageratums, old-fashioned pinks and sweet williams. Each was planted according to the instructions of the seed catalogues, and the young horticulturists also read and followed the advice of the pamphlets on "Annual Flowering Plants" and "The Home Vegetable Garden" sent out by the Department of Agriculture at Washington to any one who asks for them.

They were prudent about planting directly in the garden seeds which did not require forcing in the house, for they did not want them to be nipped, but they put them in the ground just as early as any of the seedsmen recommended, though they always

saved a part of their supply so that they might have enough for a second sowing if a frost should come.

Certain flowers which they wished to have blossom for a long time they sowed at intervals. Candytuft, for instance, they sowed first in April and they planned to make a second sowing in May and a third late in July so that they might see the pretty white border blossoms late in the autumn. Mignonette was a plant of which Mr. Emerson was as fond as Roger was of sweetpeas and the girls decided to give him a surprise by having such a succession of blooms that they might invite him to a picking bee as late as the end of October. Nasturtiums also, they planted with a liberal hand in nooks and crannies where the soil was so poor that they feared other plants would turn up their noses, and pansies, whose demure little faces were favorites with Mrs. Morton, they experimented with in various parts of the gardens and in the hotbed.

The gardens at the Mortons' and Smiths' were long established so that there was not any special inducement to change the arrangement of the beds, except as the young people had planned way back in January for the enlargement of the drying green. The new garden, however, offered every opportunity. Each bed was laid out with especial reference to the crop that was to be put into it and the land was naturally so varied that there was the kind of soil and the right exposure for plants that required much moisture and for those that preferred a sandy soil, for the sun lovers and the shade lovers.

The newly aroused interest in plants extended to

the care of the house plants which heretofore had been the sole concern of Mrs. Emerson and Mrs. Morton. Now the girls begged the privilege of trimming off the dead leaves from the ivies and geraniums and of washing away with oil of lemon and a stiff brush the scale that sometimes came on the palms. They even learned to kill the little soft white creature called aphis by putting under the plant a pan of hot coals with tobacco thrown on them.

"It certainly has a sufficiently horrid smell," exclaimed Ethel Brown. "I don't wonder the beasties curl up and die; I'd like to myself."

"They say aphis doesn't come on a plant with healthy sap," Ethel Blue contributed to this talk, "so the thing to do is to make these plants so healthy that the animals drop off starved."

"This new development is going to be a great comfort to me if it keeps on," Mrs. Emerson confessed to her daughter humorously. "I shall encourage the girls to use my plants for instruction whenever they want to."

"You may laugh at their sudden affection," returned Mrs. Morton seriously, "but I've noticed that everything the U. S. C. sets its heart on doing gets done, and I've no doubt whatever that they'll have what Roger calls 'some' garden this next summer."

"Roger has had long consultations with his grandfather about fertilizers and if he's interested in the beginnings of a garden and not merely in the results I think we can rely on him."

"They have all been absorbed in the subject for three months and now

'Lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone;
The flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come.' "

Roger maintained that his Aunt Louise's house ought to be begun at the time that he planted his sweetpeas.

"If I can get into the ground enough to plant, surely the cellar diggers ought to be able to do the same," he insisted.

March was not over when he succeeded in preparing a trench a foot deep all around the spot which was to be his vegetable garden except for a space about three feet wide which he left for an entrance. In the bottom he placed three inches of manure and over that two inches of good soil. In this he planted the seeds half an inch apart in two rows and covered them with soil to the depth of three inches, stamping it down hard. As the vines grew to the top of the trench he kept them warm with the rest of the earth that he had taken out, until the opening was entirely filled.

The builder was not of Roger's mind about the cellar digging, but he really did begin operations in April. Every day the Mortons and Smiths, singly or in squads, visited the site of Sweetbrier Lodge, as Mrs. Smith and Dorothy had decided to call the house. Dorothy had started a notebook in which to keep account of the progress of the new estate, but after the first entry—"Broke ground to-day"—matters seemed to advance so slowly that she had to fill in with memoranda concerning the growth of the garden.

Even before the house was started its position and that of the garage had been staked so that the garden might not encroach on them. Then the garden had been laid out with a great deal of care by the united efforts of the Club and Mr. Emerson and his farm superintendent.

Often the Ethels and Dorothy extended their walk to the next field and to the woods and rocks at the back. The Clarks had learned nothing more about their Cousin Emily, although they had a man searching records and talking with the older people of a number of towns in Nebraska. He reported that he was of the opinion that either the child had died when young or that she had moved to a considerable distance from the town of her birth or that she had been adopted and had taken the name of her foster parents. At any rate consultation of records of marriages and deaths in several counties had revealed to him no Emily Leonard.

The Clarks were quite as depressed by this outcome of the search as was Mrs. Smith, but they had instructed the detective to continue his investigation. Meanwhile they begged Dorothy and her cousins to enjoy the meadow and woods as much as they liked.

The warm moist days of April tempted the girls to frequent searches for wild flowers. They found the lot a very gold mine of delight. There was so much variety of soil and of sunshine and of shadow that plants of many different tastes flourished where in the meadow across the road only a few kinds seemed to live. It was with a hearty shout they hailed the first violets.

"Here they are, here they are!" cried Ethel Blue. "Aunt Marion said she was sure she saw some near the brook. She quoted some poetry about it—

"'Blue ran the flash across;
Violets were born!'"

"That's pretty; what's the rest of it?" asked Ethel Brown, on her knees taking up some of the plants with her trowel and placing them in her basket so carefully that there was plenty of earth surrounding each one to serve as a nest when it should be put into Helen's wild flower bed.

"It's about something good happening when everything seems very bad," explained Ethel Blue. "Browning wrote it."

"Such a starved bank of moss
Till, that May morn,
Blue ran the flash across:
Violets were born!

"Sky—what a scowl of cloud
Till, near and far,
Ray on ray split the shroud:
Splendid, a star!

"World—how it walled about
Life with disgrace
Till God's own smile came out:
That was thy face!"

"It's always so, isn't it!" approved Dorothy. "And the more we think about the silver lining to every cloud the more likely it is to show itself."

"What's this delicate white stuff? And these tiny bluey eyes?" asked Ethel Blue, who was again stooping over to examine the plants that enjoyed the moist positions near the stream.

"The eyes are houstonia—Quaker ladies. We must have a clump of them. Saxifrage, Helen said

Yellow Adder's Tongue

the other was. She called my attention the other day to some they had at school to analyze. It has the same sort of stem that the hepatica has."

"I remember—a scape—only this isn't so downy."

"They're pretty, aren't they? We must be sure to get a good sized patch; you can't see them well enough when there is only a plant or two."

"Helen wants a regular village of every kind that

she transplants. She says she'd rather have a good many of a few kinds than a single plant of ever so many kinds."

"It will be prettier. What do you suppose this yellow bell-shaped flower is?"

"It ought to be a lily, hanging its head like that."

"It is a lily," corroborated Ethel Brown, "but it's called 'dog-tooth violet' though it isn't a violet at all."

"What a queer mistake. Hasn't it any other name?"

"Adder's-tongue. That's more suitable, isn't it?"

"Yes, except that I hate to have a lovely flower called by a snake's name!"

"Not all snakes are venomous; and, anyway, we ought to remember that every animal has some means of protecting himself and the snakes do it through their poison fangs."

"Or through their squeezing powers, like that big constrictor we saw at the Zoo."

"I suppose it is fair for them to have a defence," admitted Ethel Blue, "but I don't like them, just the same, and I wish this graceful flower had some other name."

"It has."

"O, *that!* 'Dog-tooth' is just about as ugly as 'adder's tongue'! The botanists were in bad humor when they christened the poor little thing!"

"Do you remember what Bryant says about 'The Yellow Violet'?" asked Ethel Brown, who was always committing verses to memory.

"Tell us," begged Ethel Blue, who was expending

special care on digging up this contribution to the garden as if to make amends for the unkindness of the scientific world, and Ethel Brown repeated the poem beginning

"When beechen buds begin to swell,
And woods the blue-bird's warble know,
The yellow violet's modest bell
Peeps from last year's leaves below."

Dorothy went into ecstasies over the discovery of two roots of white violets, but there seemed to be no others, though they all sought diligently for the fragrant blossoms among the leaves.

A cry from Ethel Blue brought the others to a drier part of the field at a distance from the brook. There in a patch of soil that was almost sandy was a great patch of violets of palest hue, with deep orange eyes. They were larger than any of the other violets and their leaves were entirely different.

"What funny leaves," cried Dorothy. "They look as if some one had crumpled up a real violet leaf and cut it from the edge to the stem into a fine fringe."

"Turn it upside down and press it against the ground. Don't you think it looks like a bird's claw?"

"So it does! This must be a 'bird-foot violet.'"

"It is, and there's more meaning in the name than in the one the yellow bell suffers from. Do you suppose there are any violets up in the woods?"

"They seem to fit in everywhere; I shouldn't be a bit surprised if there were some there."

Sure enough, there were, smaller and darker in color than the flowers down by the brook and hiding more shyly under their shorter-stemmed leaves.

"Helen is going to have some trouble to make her garden fit the tastes of all these different flowers," said Ethel Brown thoughtfully. "I don't see how she's going to do it."

Blue Flag

"Naturally it's sort of half way ground," replied Ethel Blue. "She can enrich the part that is to hold the ones that like rich food and put sand where these bird foot fellows are to go, and plant the wet-lovers at the end where the hydrant is so that there'll be a temptation to give them a sprinkle every time the hose is screwed on."

"The ground is always damp around the hydrant; I guess she'll manage to please her new tenants."

"If only Mother can buy this piece of land," said Dorothy, "I'm going to plant forget-me-nots and cow lilies and arum lilies right in the stream. There are flags and pickerel weed and cardinals here already.

It will make a beautiful flower bed all the length of the field."

"I hope and hope every day that it will come out right," sighed Ethel Blue. "Of course the Miss Clarks are lovely about it, but you can't do things as if it were really yours."

Almost at the same instant both the Ethels gave a cry as each discovered a plant she had been looking for.

"Mine is wild ginger, I'm almost sure," exclaimed Ethel Brown. "Come and see, Dorothy."

"Has it a thick, leathery leaf that lies down almost flat?" asked Dorothy, running to see for herself.

"Yes, and a blossom you hardly notice. It's hidden under the leaves and it's only yellowish-green. You have to look hard for it."

"That must be wild ginger," Dorothy decided. "What's yours, Ethel Blue?"

"I know mine is hepatica. See the 'hairy scape' Helen talked about? And see what a lovely, lovely color the blossom is? Violet with a hint of pink?"

"That would be the best of all for a border. The leaves stay green all winter and the blossoms come early in the spring and encourage you to think that after a while all the flowers are going to awaken."

"It's a shame to take all this out of Dorothy's lot."

"It may never be mine," sighed Dorothy. "Still, perhaps we ought not to take too many roots; the Miss Clarks may not want all the flowers taken out of their woods."

"We'll take some from here and some from

Grandfather's woods," decided Ethel Brown. "There are a few in the West Woods, too."

So they dug up but a comparatively small number of the hepaticas, nor did they take many of the columbines nodding from a cleft in the piled-up rocks.

"I know that when we have our wild garden fully planted I'm not going to want to pick flowers just for the sake of picking them the way I used to," confessed Ethel Blue. "Now I know something about them they seem so alive to me, sort of like people—I'm sure they won't like to be taken travelling and forced to make a new home for themselves."

"I know how you feel," responded Dorothy slowly. "I feel as if those columbines were birds that had perched on those rocks just for a minute and were going to fly away, and I didn't want to disturb them before they flitted."

They all stood gazing at the delicate, tossing blossoms whose spurred tubes swung in every gentlest breeze.

"It has a bird's name, too," added Dorothy as if there had been no silence; "*aquilegia*—the eagle flower."

"Why eagle? The eagle is a strenuous old fowl," commented Ethel Brown. "The name doesn't seem appropriate."

"It's because of the spurs—they suggest an eagle's talons."

"That's too far-fetched to suit me," confessed Ethel Brown.

"It is called 'columbine' because the spurs look a

little like doves around a drinking fountain, and the Latin word for dove is *'columba,'* " said Dorothy.

"It's queer the way they name flowers after animals—" said Ethel Blue.

"Or parts of animals," laughed her cousin. "Saxifrage isn't; Helen told me the name meant 'rock-breaker,' because some kinds grow in the clefts of rocks the way the columbines do."

"I wish we could find a trillium," said Ethel Blue. "The *tri* in that name means that everything about it is in threes."

"What is a trillium?" asked Ethel Brown.

"Roger brought in a handful the other day. 'Wake-robin' he called it."

"O, I remember them. There was a bare stalk with three leaves and the flower was under the leaves."

"There were three petals to the corolla and three sepals to the calyx. He had purple ones and white ones."

"Here's a white one this very minute," said Dorothy, pouncing upon a plant eight or ten inches in height whose leaves looked eager and strong.

"See," she said as they all leaned over to examine it; "the blossom has two sets of leaves. The outer set is usually green or some color not so gay as to attract insects or birds that might destroy the flower when it is in bud. These outer leaves are called, all together, the calyx, and each one of them is called a sepal."

"The green thing on the back of a rose is the calyx and each of its leaflets is called a sepal," said

Ethel Brown by way of fixing the definition firmly in her mind.

"The pretty part of the flower is the corolla which means 'little crown,' and each of its parts is called a petal."

"How did you learn all that?" demanded Ethel Brown admiringly.

"Your grandmother told me the other day."

Wind Flower

"You've got a good memory. Helen has told me a lot of botanical terms, but I forget them."

"I try hard to remember everything I hear any one say about flowers or vegetables or planting now. You never can tell when it may be useful," and Dorothy nodded wisely.

"Shall we take up this wake-robin?" asked Ethel Blue.

"Let's not," pleaded Ethel Brown. "We shall find others somewhere and there's only one here."

They left it standing, but when they came upon a growth of wind-flowers there were so many of them that they did not hesitate to dig them freely.

"I wonder why they're called 'wind-flowers'?"

queried Ethel Brown, whose curiosity on the subject of names had been aroused.

"I know that answer," replied Ethel Blue unexpectedly. "That is, nobody knows the answer exactly; I know that much."

The other girls laughed.

"What is the answer as far as anybody knows it?" demanded Dorothy.

"The scientific name is 'anemone.' It comes from the Greek word meaning 'wind.' "

"That seems to be a perfectly good answer. Probably it was given because they dance around so prettily in the wind," guessed Dorothy.

"Helen's botany says that it was christened that either because it grew in windy places or because it blossomed at the windy season."

"Dorothy's explanation suits me best," Ethel Brown decided. "I shall stick to that."

"I think it's prettiest myself," agreed Dorothy.

"She's so much in earnest she doesn't realize that she's deciding against famous botanists," giggled Ethel Brown.

"It *is* prettier—a lot prettier," insisted Ethel Blue. "I'm glad I've a cousin who can beat scientists!"

"What a glorious lot of finds!" cried Ethel Brown. "Just think of our getting all these in one afternoon!"

"I don't believe we could except in a place like this where any plant can have his taste suited with meadow or brookside or woods or rocks."

"And sunshine or shadow."

They were in a gay mood as they gathered up

their baskets and trowels and gently laid pieces of newspaper over the uprooted plants.

"It isn't hot to-day but we won't run any risk of their getting a headache from the sun," declared Dorothy.

"These woodsy ones that aren't accustomed to bright sunshine may be sensitive to it," assented Ethel Blue. "We must remember to tell Helen in just what sort of spot we found each one so she can make its corner in the garden bed as nearly like it as possible."

"I'm going to march in and quote Shakespeare to her," laughed Ethel Brown. "I'm going to say

> 'I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
> Where oxlip and the nodding violet grows,'

and then I'll describe the 'bank' so she can copy it."

"If she doesn't she may have to repeat Bryant's 'Death of the Flowers':—

'The windflower and the violet, they perished long ago.'"

CHAPTER VII

COLOR SCHEMES

"LOOK out, Della; don't pick that! *Don't* pick that, it's poison ivy!" cried Ethel Brown as all the Club members were walking on the road towards Grandfather Emerson's. A vine with handsome glossy leaves reached an inviting cluster toward passers-by.

"Poison ivy!" repeated Della, springing back. "How do you know it is? I thought it was woodbine—Virginia creeper."

"Virginia creeper has as many fingers as your hand; this ivy has only three leaflets. See, I-V-Y," and Ethel Blue took a small stick and tapped a leaflet for each letter.

"I must tell Grandfather this is here," said Helen. "He tries to keep this road clear of it even if he finds it growing on land not his own. It's too dangerous to be so close to the sidewalk."

"It's a shame it behaves so badly when it's so handsome."

"It's not handsome if 'handsome is as handsome does' is true. But this is stunning when the leaves turn scarlet."

"It's a mighty good plan to admire it from a distance," decided Tom, who had been looking at it

carefully. "Della and I being 'city fellers,' we're ignorant about it. I'll remember not to touch the three-leaved I-V-Y, from now on."

The Club was intent on finishing their flower garden plans that afternoon. They had gathered together all the seedsmen's catalogues that had been sent them and they had also accumulated a pile of garden magazines. They knew, however, that Mr. Emerson had some that they did not have, and they also wanted his help, so they had telephoned over to find out whether he was to be at home and whether he would help them with the laying out of their color beds.

"Nothing I should like better," he had answered cordially so now they were on the way to put him to the test.

"We already have some of our color plants in our gardens left over from last year," Helen explained, "and some of the others that we knew we'd want we've started in the hotbed, and we've sowed a few more in the open beds, but we want to make out a full list."

"Just what is your idea," asked Mr. Emerson, while Grandmother Emerson saw that the dining table around which they were sitting had on it a plentiful supply of whole wheat bread sandwiches, the filling being dates and nuts chopped together.

Helen explained their wish to have beds all of one color.

"We girls are so crazy over pink that we're going to try a pink bed at both of Dorothy's gardens as well as in ours," she laughed.

"You'd like a list of plants that will keep on blooming all summer so that you can always run out and get a bunch of pink blossoms, I suppose."

"That's exactly what we want," and they took their pencils to note down any suggestions that Mr. Emerson made.

"We've decided on pink candytuft for the border and single pink hollyhocks for the background with foxgloves right in front of them to cover up the stems at the bottom where they haven't many leaves and a medium height phlox in front of that for the same reason."

"You should have pink morning glories and there's a rambler rose, a pink one, that you ought to have in the southeast corner on your back fence," suggested Mr. Emerson. "Stretch a strand or two of wire above the top and let the vine run along it. It blooms in June."

"Pink rambler," they all wrote. "What's its name?"

"Dorothy—"

"Smith?"

"Perkins."

James went through a pantomime that registered severe disappointment.

"Suppose we begin at the beginning," suggested Mr. Emerson. "I believe we can make out a list that will keep your pink bed gay from May till frost."

"That's what we want."

"You had some pink tulips last spring."

"We planted them in the autumn so that they'd

come out early this spring. By good luck they're just where we've decided to have a pink bed."

"There's your first flower, then. They're near the front of the bed, I hope. The low plants ought to be in front, of course, so they won't be hidden."

"They're in front. So are the hyacinths."

"Are you sure they're all pink?"

"It's a great piece of good fortune—Mother selected only pink bulbs and a few yellow ones to put back into the ground and gave the other colors to Grandmother."

"That helps you at the very start-off. There are two kinds of pinks that ought to be set near the front rank because they don't grow very tall—the moss pink and the old-fashioned 'grass pink.' They are charming little fellows and keep up a tremendous blossoming all summer long."

" 'Grass pink,' " repeated Ethel Brown, "isn't that the same as 'spice pink'?"

"That's what your grandmother calls it. She says she has seen people going by on the road sniff to see what that delicious fragrance was. I suppose these small ones must be the original pinks that the seedsmen have burbanked into the big double ones."

" 'Burbanked'?"

"That's a new verb made out of the name of Luther Burbank, the man who has raised such marvelous flowers in California and has turned the cactus into a food for cattle instead of a prickly nuisance."

"I've heard of him," said Margaret. " 'Burbanked' means 'changed into something superior,' I suppose."

"Something like that. Did you tell me you had a peony?"

"There's a good, tall tree peony that we've had moved to the new bed."

"At the back?"

"Yes, indeed; it's high enough to look over almost everything else we are likely to have. It blossoms early."

"To be a companion to the tulips and hyacinths."

"Have you started any peony seeds?"

"The Reine Hortense. Grandmother advised that. They're well up now."

"I'd plant a few seeds in your bed, too. If you can get a good stand of perennials—flowers that come up year after year of their own accord—it saves a lot of trouble."

"Those pinks are perennials, aren't they? They come up year after year in Grandmother's garden."

"Yes, they are, and so is the columbine. You ought to put that in."

"But it isn't pink. We got some in the woods the other day. It is red," objected Dorothy.

"The columbine has been 'burbanked.' There's a pink one among the cultivated kinds. They're larger than the wild ones and very lovely."

"Mother has some. Hers are called the 'Rose Queen,'" said Margaret. "There are yellow and blue ones, too."

"Your grandmother can give you some pink Canterbury bells that will blossom this year. They're biennials, you know."

"Does that mean they blossom every two years?"

"Not exactly. It means that the ones you planted in your flats will only make wood and leaves this year and won't put out any flowers until next year. That's all these pink ones of your grandmother's did last season; this summer they're ready to go into your bed and be useful."

"Our seedlings are blue, anyway," Ethel Blue reminded the others. "They must be set in the blue bed."

"How about sweet williams?" asked Mr. Emerson. "Don't I remember some in your yard?"

"Mother planted some last year," answered Roger, "but they didn't blossom."

"They will this year. They're perennials, but it takes them one season to make up their minds to set to work. There's an annual that you might sow now that will be blossoming in a few weeks. It won't last over, though."

"Annuals die down at the end of the first season. I'm getting these terms straightened in my so-called mind," laughed Dorothy.

"You said you had a bleeding heart—"

"A fine old perennial," exclaimed Ethel Brown, airing her new information.

"—and pink candy-tuft for the border and foxgloves for the back; are those old plants or seedlings?"

"Both."

"Then you're ready for anything! How about snapdragons?"

"I thought snapdragons were just common weeds," commented James.

"They've been improved, too, and now they are large and very handsome and of various heights. If you have room enough you can have a lovely bed of tall ones at the back, with the half dwarf kind before it and the dwarf in front of all. It gives a sloping mass of bloom that is lovely, and if you nip off the top blossoms when the buds appear you can make them branch sidewise and become thick."

"We certainly haven't space for that bank arrangement in our garden," decided Roger, "but it will be worth trying in Dorothy's new garden," and he put down a "D" beside the note he had made.

"The snapdragon sows itself so you're likely to have it return of its own accord another year, so you must be sure to place it just where you'd like to have it always," warned Mr. Emerson.

"The petunia sows itself, too," Margaret contributed to the general stock of knowledge. "You can get pretty, pale, pink petunias now, and they blossom at a great rate all summer."

"I know a plant we ought to try," offered James. "It's the plant they make Persian Insect Powder out of."

"The Persian daisy," guessed Mr. Emerson. "It would be fun to try that."

"Wouldn't it be easier to buy the insect powder?" asked practical Ethel Brown.

"Very much," laughed her grandfather, "but this is good fun because it doesn't always blossom 'true,' and you never know whether you'll get a pink or a deep rose color. Now, let me see," continued Mr. Emerson thoughtfully, "you've arranged for

your hollyhocks and your phlox—those will be blooming by the latter part of July, and I suppose you've put in several sowings of sweetpeas?"

They all laughed, for Roger's demand for sweetpeas had resulted in a huge amount of seeds being sown in all three of the gardens.

"Where are we now?" continued Mr. Emerson.

"Now there ought to be something that will come into its glory about the first of August," answered Helen.

"What do you say to poppies?"

"Are there pink poppies?"

"O, beauties! Big bears, and little bears, and middle-sized bears; single and double, and every one of them a joy to look upon!"

"Put down poppies two or three times," laughed Helen in answer to her grandfather's enthusiasm.

"And while we're on the letter 'P' in the seed catalogue," added Mr. Emerson, "order a few packages of single portulaca. There are delicate shades of pink now, and it's a useful little plant to grow at the feet of tall ones that have no low-growing foliage and leave the ground bare."

"It would make a good border for us at some time."

"You might try it at Dorothy's large garden. There'll be space there to have many different kinds of borders."

"We'll have to keep our eyes open for a pink lady's slipper over in the damp part of the Clarks' field," said Roger.

"O, I speak for it for my wild garden," cried Helen.

"You ought to find one about the end of July, and as that is a long way off you can put off the decision as to where to place it when you transplant it," observed their grandfather dryly.

"Mother finds verbenas and 'ten week stocks' useful for cutting," said Margaret. "They're easy to grow and they last a long time and there are always blossoms on them for the house."

"Pink?" asked Ethel Blue, her pencil poised until she was assured.

"A pretty shade of pink, both of them, and they're low growing, so you can put them forward in the beds after you take out the bulbs that blossomed early."

"How are we going to know just when to plant all these things so they'll come out when we want them to?" asked Della, whose city life had limited her gardening experience to a few summers at Chautauqua where they went so late in the season that their flower beds had been planted for them and were already blooming when they arrived.

"Study your catalogues, my child," James instructed her.

"But they don't always tell," objected Della, who had been looking over several.

"That's because the seedsmen sell to people all over the country—people living in all sorts of climates and with all sorts of soils. The best way is to ask the seedsman where you buy your seeds to

indicate on the package or in a letter what the sowing time should be for our part of the world."

"Then we'll bother Grandfather all we can," threatened Ethel Brown seriously. "He's given us this list in the order of their blossoming—"

"More or less," interposed Mr. Emerson. "Some of them over-lap, of course. It's roughly accurate, though."

"You can't stick them in a week apart and have them blossom a week apart?" asked Della.

"Not exactly. It takes some of them longer to germinate and make ready to bloom than it does others. But of course it's true in a general way that the first to be planted are the first to bloom."

"We haven't put in the late ones yet," Ethel Blue reminded Mr. Emerson.

"Asters, to begin with. I don't see how there'll be enough room in your small bed to make much of a show with asters. I should put some in, of course, in May, but there's a big opportunity at the new garden to have a splendid exhibition of them. Some asters now are almost as large and as handsome as chrysanthemums—astermums, they call them—and the pink ones are especially lovely."

"Put a big 'D' against 'asters,' " advised Roger. "That will mean that there must be a large number put into Dorothy's new garden."

"The aster will begin to blossom in August and will continue until light frost and the chrysanthemums will begin a trifle later and will last a little longer unless there is a killing frost."

"Can we get blossoms on chrysanthemums the

first year?" asked Margaret, who had not found that true in her experience in her mother's garden.

"There are some new kinds that will blossom the first year, the seedsmen promise. I'd like to have you try some of them."

"Mother has two or three pink ones—well established plants—that she's going to let us move to the pink bed," said Helen.

"The chrysanthemums will end your procession," said Mr. Emerson, "but you mustn't forget to put in some mallow. They are easy to grow and blossom liberally toward the end of the season."

"Can we make candy marshmallows out of it?"

"You can, but it would be like the Persian insect powder—it would be easier to buy it. But it has a handsome pink flower and you must surely have it on your list."

"I remember when Mother used to have the greatest trouble getting cosmos to blossom," said Margaret. "The frost almost always caught it. Now there is a kind that comes before the frost."

"Cosmos is a delight at the end of the season," remarked Mr. Emerson. "Almost all the autumn plants are stocky and sturdy, but cosmos is as graceful as a summer plant and as delicate as a spring blossom. You can wind up your floral year with asters and mallow and chrysanthemums and cosmos all blooming at once."

"Now for the blue beds," said Tom, excusing himself for looking at his watch on the plea that he and Della had to go back to New York by a comparatively early train.

"If you're in a hurry I'll just give you a few suggestions," said Mr. Emerson. "Really blue flowers are not numerous, I suppose you have noticed."

"We've decided on ageratum for the border and larkspur and monkshood for the back," said Ethel Brown.

"There are blue crocuses and hyacinths and 'baby's breath' for your earliest blossoms, and blue columbines as well as pink and yellow ones! and blue morning glories for your 'climber,' and blue bachelors' buttons and Canterbury bells, and mourning bride, and pretty blue lobelia for low growing plants and blue lupine for a taller growth. If you are willing to depart from real blue into violet you can have heliotrope and violets and asters and pansies and primroses and iris."

"The wild flag is fairly blue," insisted Roger, who was familiar with the plants that edged the brook on his grandfather's farm.

"It is until you compare it with another moisture lover—forget-me-not."

"If Dorothy buys the Clarks' field she can start a colony of flags and forget-me-nots in the stream," suggested James.

"Can you remember cineraria? There's a blue variety of that, and one of salpiglossis, which is an exquisite flower in spite of its name."

"One of the sweetpea packages is marked 'blue,' " said Roger, "I wonder if it will be a real blue?"

"Some of them are pretty near it. Now this isn't a bad list for a rather difficult color," Mr. Emer-

son went on, looking over Ethel Blue's paper, "but you can easily see that there isn't the variety of the pink list and that the true blues are scarce."

"We're going to try it, anyway," returned Helen. "Perhaps we shall run across some others. Now I wrote down for the yellows, yellow crocuses first of all and yellow tulips."

"There are many yellow spring flowers and late summer brings goldenrod, so it seems as if the extremes liked the color," said Margaret observantly.

"The intermediate season does, too," returned Mr. Emerson.

"Daffodils and jonquils are yellow and early enough to suit the most impatient," remarked James.

"Who wrote this," asked Mr. Emerson, from whom Ethel Brown inherited her love of poetry:

> "I wandered lonely as a cloud
> That floats on high on vales and hills,
> When all at once I saw a crowd
> A host of golden daffodils;
> Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
> Fluttering and dancing in the breeze."

"Wordsworth," cried Ethel Brown.

"Wordsworth," exclaimed Tom Watkins in the same breath.

"That must mean that daffies grow wild in England," remarked Dorothy.

"They do, and we can have something of the same effect here if we plant them through a lawn. The bulbs must be put in like other bulbs, in the autumn. Crocuses may be treated in the same way.

Then in the spring they come gleaming through the sod and fill everybody with Wordsworth's delight."

"Here's another competition between Helen's wild garden and the color bed; which shall take the buttercups and cowslips?"

"Let the wild bed have them," urged Grandfather. "There will be plenty of others for the yellow bed."

"We want yellow honeysuckle climbing on the high wire," declared Roger.

"Assisted by yellow jessamine?" asked Margaret.

"And canary bird vine," contributed Ethel Blue.

"And golden glow to cover the fence," added Ethel Brown.

"The California poppy is a gorgeous blossom for an edge," said Ethel Blue, "and there are other kinds of poppies that are yellow."

"Don't forget the yellow columbines," Dorothy reminded them, "and the yellow snapdragons."

"There's a yellow cockscomb as well as a red."

"And a yellow verbena."

"Being a doctor's son I happen to remember that calendula, which takes the pain out of a cut finger most amazingly, has a yellow flower."

"Don't forget stocks and marigolds."

"And black-eyed-Susans—rudbeckia—grow very large when they're cultivated."

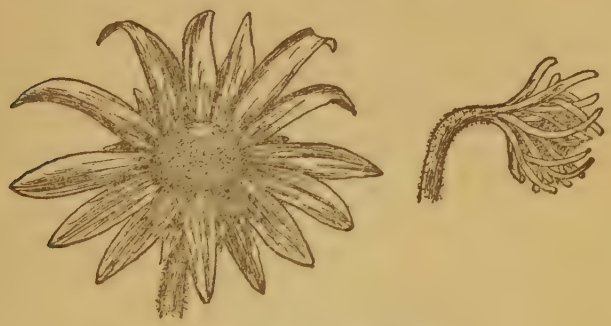
"That ought to go in the wild garden," said Helen.

"We'll let you have it," responded Roger generously. "We can put the African daisy in the yellow bed instead."

"Calliopsis or coreopsis is one of the yellow plants that the Department of Agriculture Bulletin mentions," said Dorothy. "It tells you just how to plant it and we put in the seeds early on that account."

"Gaillardia always reminds me of it a bit—the lemon color," said Ethel Brown.

"Only that's stiffer. If you want really, truly prim things try zinnias—old maids."



Rudbeckia—Black-eyed Susan

"Zinnias come in a great variety of colors now," reported Mr. Emerson. "A big bowl of zinnias is a handsome sight."

"We needn't put any sunflowers into the yellow bed," Dorothy reminded them, "because almost my whole back yard is going to be full of them."

"And you needn't plant any special yellow nasturtiums because Mother loves them and she has planted enough to give us flowers for the house, and flowers and leaves for salads and sandwiches, and seeds for pickle to use with mutton instead of capers."

"There's one flower you must be sure to have plenty of even if you don't make these colored beds complete," urged Mr. Emerson; "that's the 'chalk-lover,' gypsophila."

"What is it?"

"The delicate, white blossom that your grandmother always puts among cut flowers. It is feathery and softens and harmonizes the hues of all the rest.

'So warm with light his blended colors flow,'

in a bouquet when there's gypsophila in it."

"But what a name!" ejaculated Roger.

CHAPTER VIII

CAVE LIFE

THE dogwood was in blossom when the girls first established themselves in the cave in the Fitz-James woods. Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Smith thought it was rather too cool, but the girls invited them to come and have afternoon cocoa with them and proved to their satisfaction that the rocks were so sheltered by their position and by the trees that towered above them that it would take a sturdy wind to make them really uncomfortable.

Their first duty had been to clean out the cave.

"We can pretend that no one ever has lived here since the days when everybody lived in caves," said Ethel Blue, who was always pretending something unusual. "We must be the first people to discover it."

"I dare say we are," replied Dorothy.

"Uhuh," murmured Ethel Brown, a sound which meant a negative reply. "Here's an old tin can, so we aren't the very first."

"It may have been brought here by a wolf," suggested Ethel Blue.

"Perhaps it was a werwolf," suggested Dorothy.

"What's that?"

"A man turned by magic into a wolf but keeping his human feelings. The more I think of it the more I'm sure that it was a werwolf that brought

the can here, because, having human feelings, he would know about cans and what they had in them, and being a wolf he would carry it to his lair or den or whatever they call it, to devour it."

"Really, Dorothy, you make me uncomfortable!" exclaimed Ethel Blue.

"That may be one down there in the field now," continued Dorothy, enjoying her make-believe.

The Ethels turned and gazed, each with an armful of trash that she had brought out of the cave. There was, in truth, a figure down in the field beside the brook, and he was leaning over and thrusting a stick into the ground and examining it closely when he drew it out.

"That can't be a werwolf," remonstrated Ethel Brown. "That's a man."

"Perhaps in the twentieth century wolves turn into men instead of men turning into wolves," suggested Dorothy. "This may be a wolf with a man's shape but keeping the feelings of a wolf, instead of the other way around."

"Don't, Dorothy!" remonstrated Ethel Blue again. "He does look like a horrid sort of man, doesn't he?"

They all looked at him and wondered what he could be doing in the Miss Clarks' field, but he did not come any nearer to them so they did not have a chance to find out whether he really was as horrid looking as Ethel Blue imagined.

It was not a short task to make the cave as clean as the girls wanted it to be. The owner of the tin can had been an untidy person or else his occupation

of Fitz-James's rocks had been so long ago that Nature had accumulated a great deal of rubbish. Whichever explanation was correct, there were many armfuls to be removed and then the interior of the cave had to be subjected to a thorough sweeping before the girls' ideas of tidiness were satisfied. They had to carry all the rubbish away to some distance, for it would not do to leave it near the cave to be an eyesore during the happy days that they meant to spend there.

It was all done and Roger, who happened along, had made a bonfire for them and consumed all the undesirable stuff, before the two mothers appeared for the promised cocoa and the visit of inspection.

The girls at once set about the task of converting them to a belief in the sheltered position of the cave and then they turned their attention to the preparation of the feast. They had brought an alcohol stove that consisted of a small tripod which held a tin of solid alcohol and supported a saucepan. When packing up time came the tripod and the can fitted into the saucepan and the handles folded about it compactly.

"We did think at first of having an old stove top that Roger saw thrown away at Grandfather's," Ethel Brown explained. "We could build two brick sides to hold it up and have the stone for a back and leave the front open and run a piece of stove pipe up through that crack in the rocks."

Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Smith, who were sitting on a convenient bit of rock just outside the cave, peered in as the description progressed.

"Then we could burn wood underneath and regulate the draft by making a sort of blower with some piece of old sheet iron."

The mothers made no comment as Ethel Brown seemed not to have finished her account.

"Then we thought that perhaps you'd let us have that old oil stove up in the attic. We could set it on this flat rock on this side of the cave."

"We thought there might be some danger about that because it isn't very, *very* large in here, so we finally decided on this alcohol stove. It's safe and it doesn't take up any room and this solid alcohol doesn't slop around and set your dress afire or your table cloth, and we can really cook a good many things on it and the rest we can cook in our own little kitchen and bring over here. If we cover them well they'll still be warm when they get here."

"That's a wise decision," assented Mrs. Morton, nodding toward her sister-in-law. "I should be afraid that the stove top arrangement might be like the oil stove—the fuel might fall about and set fire to your frocks."

"And it would take up much more space in the cave," suggested Mrs. Smith. "Here's a contribution to your equipment," and she brought out a box of paper plates and cups, and another of paper napkins.

"These are fine!" cried Ethel Blue. "They'll save washing."

"Here's our idea for furnishing. Do you want to hear it?" asked Dorothy.

"Of course we do."

"Do you see that flat oblong space there at the back? We're going to fit a box in there. We'll turn it on its side, put hinges and a padlock on the cover to make it into a door, and fix up shelves."

"I see," nodded her mother and aunt. "That will be your store cupboard."

"And our sideboard and our linen closet, all in one. We're going to make it when we go home this afternoon because we know now what the measurements are and we've got just the right box down in the cellar."

"Where do you get the water?"

"Roger is cleaning out the spring now and making the basin under it a little larger, so we shall always have fresh spring water."

"That's good. I was going to warn you always to boil any water from the brook."

"We'll remember."

The water for the cocoa was now bubbling in the saucepan. Ethel Blue took four spoonfuls of prepared cocoa, wet it with one spoonful of water and rubbed it smooth. Then she stirred it into a pint of the boiling water and when this had boiled up once she added a pint of milk. When the mixture boiled she took it off at once and served it in the paper cups that her aunt had brought. To go with it Ethel Brown had prepared almond biscuit. They were made by first blanching two ounces of almonds by pouring boiling water on them and then slipping off their brown overcoats. After they had been ground twice over in the meat chopper they were mixed with four tablespoonfuls of flour and

one tablespoonful of sugar and moistened with a tablespoonful of milk. When they were thoroughly mixed and rolled thin they were cut into small rounds and baked in a quick oven for ten or fifteen minutes.

"These are delicious, my dear," Mrs. Smith said, smiling at her nieces, and the Ethels were greatly pleased at their Aunt Louise's praise.

They sat about on the rocks and enjoyed their meal heartily. The birds were busy over their heads, the leaves were beginning to come thickly in the tree crowns and the chipmunks scampered busily about, seeming to be not at all frightened by the coming of these new visitors to their haunts. Dorothy tried to coax one to eat out of her hand. He was curious to try the food that she held out to him and his courage brought him almost within reach of her fingers before it failed and sent him scampering back to his hole, the stripes on his back looking like ribbons as he leaped to safety.

Within a month the cave was in excellent working order. The box proved to be a success just as the girls had planned it. They kept there such stores as they did not care to carry back and forth—sugar, salt and pepper, cocoa, crackers—and a supply of eggs, cream-cheese and cookies and milk always fresh. Sometimes when the family thermos bottle was not in use they brought the milk in that and at other times they brought it in an ordinary bottle and let it stand in the hollow below the spring. Glass fruit jars with screw tops preserved all that was entrusted to them free from injury by any ma-

rauding animals who might be tempted by the smell to break open the cupboard. These jars the girls placed on the top shelf; on the next they ranged their paper "linen"—which they used for napkins and then as fuel to start the bonfire in which they destroyed all the rubbish left over from their meal. This fire was always small, was made in one spot which Roger had prepared by encircling it with stones, and was invariably put out with a saucepanful of water from the brook.

"It never pays to leave a fire without a good dousing," he always insisted. "The rascally thing may be playing 'possum and blaze out later when there is no one here to attend to it."

A piece of board which could be moved about at will was used as a table when the weather was such as to make eating inside of the cave desirable. One end was placed on top of the cupboard and the other on a narrow ledge of stone that projected as if made for the purpose. One or two large stones and a box or two served as seats, but there was not room inside for all the members of the Club. When there was a general meeting some had to sit outside.

They added to their cooking utensils a few flat saucepans in which water would boil quickly and they made many experiments in cooking vegetables. Beans they gave up trying to cook after several experiments, because they took so long—from one to three hours—for both the dried and the fresh kinds, that the girls felt that they could not afford so much alcohol. They eliminated turnips, too, after they

had prodded a frequent fork into some obstinate roots for about three quarters of an hour. Beets were nearly as discouraging, but not quite, when they were young and tender, and the same was true of cabbage.

"It's only the infants that we can use in this affair," declared Dorothy after she had replenished the saucepan from another in which she had been heating water for the purpose, over a second alcohol stove that her mother had lent them. Spinach, onions and parsnips were done in half an hour and potatoes in twenty-five minutes.

They finally gave up trying to cook vegetables whole over this stove, for they concluded that not only was it necessary to have extremely young vegetables but the size of the cooking utensils must of necessity be too small to have the proceedings a success. They learned one way, however, of getting ahead of the tiny saucepan and the small stove. That was by cutting the corn from the cob and by peeling the potatoes and slicing them very thin before they dropped them into boiling water. Then they were manageable.

"Miss Dawson, the domestic science teacher, says that the water you cook any starchy foods in must always be boiling like mad," Ethel Blue explained to her aunt one day when she came out to see how matters were going. "If it isn't the starch is mushy. That's why you mustn't be impatient to put on rice and potatoes and cereals until the water is just bouncing."

"Almost all vegetables have some starch," ex-

plained Mrs. Morton. "Water *really* boiling is your greatest friend. When you girls are old enough to drink tea you must remember that boiling water for tea is something more than putting on water in a saucepan or taking it out of a kettle on the stove."

"Isn't boiling water boiling water?" asked Roger, who was listening.

"There's boiling water *and* boiling water," smiled his mother. "Water for tea should be freshly drawn so that there are bubbles of air in it and it should be put over the fire at once. When you are waiting for it to boil you should scald your teapot so that its coldness may not chill the hot water when you come to the actual making of the tea."

"Do I seem to remember a rule about using one teaspoonful of tea for each person and one for the pot?" asked Tom.

"That is the rule for the cheaper grades of tea, but the better grades are so strong that half a teaspoonful for each drinker is enough."

"Then it's just as cheap to get tea at a dollar a pound as the fifty cent quality."

"Exactly; and the taste is far better. Well, you have your teapot warm and your tea in it waiting, and the minute the water boils vigorously you pour it on the tea."

"What would happen if you let it boil a while?"

"If you should taste water freshly boiled and water that has been boiling for ten minutes you'd notice a decided difference. One has a lively taste

and the other is flat. These qualities are given to the pot of tea of course."

"That's all news to me," declared James. "I'm glad to know it."

"I used to think 'tea and toast' was the easiest thing in the world to prepare until Dorothy taught me how to make toast when she was fixing invalid dishes for Grandfather after he was hurt in the fire at Chautauqua," said Ethel Brown. "She opened my eyes," and she nodded affectionately at her cousin.

"There's one thing we must learn to make or we won't be true campers," insisted Tom.

"What is it? I'm game to make it or eat it," responded Roger instantly.

"Spider cakes."

"Spiders! Ugh!" ejaculated Della daintily.

"Hush; a spider is a frying pan," Ethel Brown instructed her. "Tell us how you do them, Tom," she begged.

"You use the kind of flour that is called 'prepared flour.' It rises without any fuss."

The Ethels laughed at this description, but they recognized the value in camp of a flour that doesn't make any fuss.

"Mix a pint of the flour with half a pint of milk. Let your spider get hot and then grease it with butter or cotton seed oil."

"Why not lard."

"Lard will do the deed, of course, but butter or a vegetable fat always seems to me cleaner," pronounced Tom wisely.

"Won't you listen to Thomas!" cried Roger. "How do you happen to know so much?" he inquired amazedly.

"I went camping for a whole month once and I watched the cook a lot and since then I've gathered ideas about the use of fat in cooking. As little frying as possible for me, thank you, and no lard in mine!"

They smiled at his earnestness, but they all felt the same way, for the girls were learning to approve of delicacy in cooking the more they cooked.

"Go ahead with your spider cake," urged Margaret, who was writing down the receipt as Tom gave it.

"When your buttered spider is ready you pour in half the mixture you have ready. Spread it smooth over the whole pan, put on a cover that you've heated, and let the cake cook four minutes. Turn it over and let the other side cook for four minutes. You ought to have seen our camp cook turn over his cakes; he tossed them into the air and he gave the pan such a twist with his wrist that the cake came down all turned over and ready to let the good work go on."

"What did he do with the other half of his batter?" asked Ethel Brown, determined to know exactly what happened at every stage of proceedings.

"When he had taken out the first cake and given it to us he put in the remainder and cooked it while we were attacking the first installment."

"Was it good?"

"You bet!"

"I don't know whether we can do it with this tiny

fire, but let's try—what do you say?" murmured Ethel Brown to Ethel Blue.

"We ought to have trophies of our bow and spear," Roger suggested when he was helping with the furnishing arrangements.

"There aren't any," replied Ethel Brown briefly, "but Dicky has a glass bowl full of tadpoles; we can have those."

So the tadpoles came to live in the cave, carried out into the light whenever some one came and remembered to do it, and as some one came almost every day, and as all the U. S. C. members were considerate of the needs and feelings of animals as well as of people, the tiny creatures did not suffer from their change of habitation.

Dicky had taken the frogs' eggs from the edge of a pool on his grandfather's farm. They looked like black dots at first. Then they wriggled out of the jelly and took their place in the world as tadpoles. It was an unfailing delight to all the young people to look at them through a magnifying glass. They had apparently a round head with side gills through which they breathed, and a long tail. After a time tiny legs appeared under what might pass as the chin. Then the body grew longer and another pair of legs made their appearance. Finally the tail was absorbed and the tadpole's transformation into a frog was complete. All this did not take place for many months, however, but through the summer the Club watched the little wrigglers carefully and thought that they could see a difference from week to week.

CHAPTER IX

"NOTHING BUT LEAVES"

WHEN the leaves were well out on the trees Helen held an Observation Class one afternoon, in front of the cave.

"How many members of this handsome and intelligent Club know what leaves are for?" she inquired.

"As representing in a high degree both the qualities you mention, Madam President," returned Tom, with a bow, "I take upon myself the duty of replying that perhaps you and Roger do because you've studied botany, and maybe Margaret and James do because they've had a garden, and it's possible that the Ethels and Dorothy do inasmuch as they've had the great benefit of your acquaintance, but that Della and I don't know the very first thing about leaves except that spinach and lettuce are good to eat."

"Take a good, full breath after that long sentence," advised James. "Go ahead, Helen. I don't know much about leaves except to recognize them when I see them."

"Do you know what they're for?" demanded Helen, once again.

"I can guess," answered Margaret. "Doesn't the plant breathe and eat through them?"

"It does exactly that. It takes up food from water and from the soil by its roots and it gets food and water from the air by its leaves."

"Sort of a slender diet," remarked Roger, who was blessed with a hearty appetite.

"The leaves give it a lot of food. I was reading in a book on botany the other day that the elm tree in Cambridge, Massachusetts, under which Washington reviewed his army during the Revolution was calculated to have about seven million leaves and that they gave it a surface of about five acres. That's quite a surface to eat with!"

Lily of the Valley Leaf

"Some mouth!" commented Roger.

"If each one of you will pick a leaf you'll have in your hand an illustration of what I say," suggested Helen.

They all provided themselves with leaves, picking them from the plants and shrubs and trees around them, except Ethel Blue, who already had a lily of the valley leaf with some flowers pinned to her blouse.

"When a leaf has everything that belongs to it it has a little stalk of its own that is called a *petiole;* and at the foot of the petiole it has two tiny leaflets called *stipules,* and it has what we usually speak of as 'the leaf' which is really the *blade.*"

They all noted these parts either on their own leaves or their neighbors', for some of their specimens came from plants that had transformed their parts.

"What is the blade of your leaf made of?" Helen asked Ethel Brown.

"Green stuff with a sort of framework inside," answered Ethel, scrutinizing the specimen in her hand.

"What are the characteristics of the framework?"

"It has big bones and little ones," cried Della.

"Good for Della! The big bones are called ribs and the fine ones are called veins. Now, will you please all hold up your leaves so we can all see each other's. What is the difference in the veining between Ethel Brown's oak leaf and Ethel Blue's lily of the valley leaf?"

Ethel Brown's Oak Leaf

After an instant's inspection Ethel Blue said, "The ribs and veins on my leaf all run the same way, and in the oak leaf they run every which way."

"Right," approved Helen again. "The lily of the valley leaf is parallel-veined and the oak leaf is net-veined. Can each one of you decide what your own leaf is?"

"I have a blade of grass; it's parallel veined,"

Roger determined. All the others had net veined specimens, but they remembered that iris and flag and corn and bear-grass—yucca—all were parallel.

"Yours are nearly all netted because there are more net-veined leaves than the other kind," Helen told them. "Now, there are two kinds of parallel veining and two kinds of net veining," she went on. "All the parallel veins that you've spoken of are like Ethel Blue's lily of the valley leaf—the ribs run from the stem to the tip—but there's another kind of parallel veining that you see in the pickerel weed that's growing down there in the brook; in that the veins run parallel from a strong midrib to the edge of the leaf."

James made a rush down to the brook and came back with a leaf of the pickerel weed and they handed it about and compared it with the lily of the valley leaf.

"Look at Ethel Brown's oak leaf," Helen continued. "Do you see it has a big midrib and the other veins run out from it 'every which way' as Ethel Blue said, making a net? Doesn't it remind you of a feather?"

They all agreed that it did, and they passed around Margaret's hat which had a quill stuck in the band, and compared it with the oak leaf.

"That kind of veining is called pinnate veining from a Latin word that means 'feather,' explained Helen. "The other kind of net veining is that of the maple leaf."

Tom and Dorothy both had maple leaves and they held them up for general observation.

"How is it different from the oak veining?" quizzed Helen.

"The maple is a little like the palm of your hand with the fingers running out," offered Ethel Brown.

"That's it exactly. There are several big ribs starting at the same place instead of one midrib. Then the netting connects all these spreading ribs. That is called *palmate* veining because it's like the palm of your hand."

Tom and Dorothy both had Maple Leaves

"Or the web foot of a duck," suggested Dorothy.

"I should think all the leaves that have a feather-shaped framework would be long and all the palm-shaped ones would be fat," guessed Della.

"They are, and they have been given names descriptive of their shape. The narrowest kind, with the same width all the way, is called *'linear.'* "

"Because it's a line—more or less," cried James.

"The next wider, has a point and is called *'lance-shaped.'* The *'oblong'* is like the linear, the same size up and down, but it's much wider than the linear. The *'elliptical'* is what the oblong would be if its ends were prettily tapered off. The apple tree has a leaf whose ellipse is so wide that it is called *'oval.'* Can you guess what *'ovate'* is?"

"'Egg-shaped'?" inquired Tom.

"That's it; larger at one end than the other, while a leaf that is almost round, is called *'rotund.'*"

"Named after Della," observed Della's brother in a subdued voice that nevertheless caught his sister's ear and caused an oak twig to fly in his direction.

"There's a lance-shaped leaf that is sharp at the base instead of the point; that's named *'ob-lanceo-*

Linear Lance-shaped Oblong Elliptical Ovate

late'; and there's one called *'spatulate'* that looks like the spatula that druggists mix things with."

"That ought to be rounded at the point and narrow at the base," said the doctor's son.

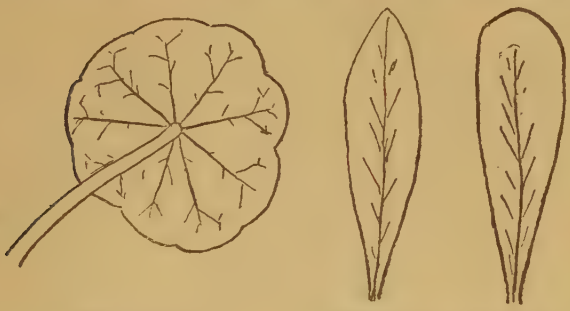
"It is. The lower leaves of the common field daisy are examples. How do you think the botanists have named the shape that is like an egg upside down?"

"*'Ob-ovate,'* if it's like the other *ob*," guessed Dorothy.

"The leaflets that make up the horse-chestnut leaf

are *'wedge-shaped'* at the base," Helen reminded them.

"Then there are some leaves that have nothing

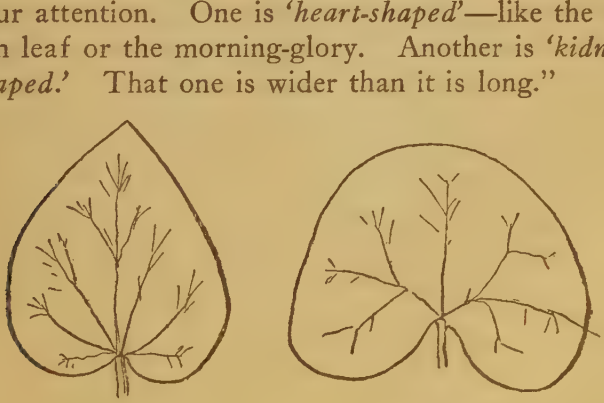


Shield-shaped
Rotund
Crenate Edge

Oblancolate

Spatulate

remarkable about their tips but have bases that draw your attention. One is *'heart-shaped'*—like the linden leaf or the morning-glory. Another is *'kidney-shaped.'* That one is wider than it is long."



Heart-shaped

Kidney-shaped

"The hepatica is kidney-shaped," remarked James.

"The *'ear-shaped'* base isn't very common in this part of the world, but there's a magnolia of that

form. The *'arrow-shaped'* base you can find in the arrow-weed in the brook. The shape like the old-time weapon, the *'halberd'* is seen in the common sorrel."

"That nice, acid-tasting leaf?"

"Yes, that's the one. What does the nasturtium leaf remind you of?"

"Dicky always says that when the Jack-in-the-Pulpit stops preaching he jumps on the back of a frog and takes a nasturtium leaf for a shield and hops

Arrow-shaped Ear-shaped Halberd-shaped

forth to look for adventures," said Roger, to whom Dicky confided many of his ideas when they were working together in the garden.

"Dicky is just right," laughed Helen. "That is a *'shield-shaped'* leaf."

"Do the tips of the leaves have names?"

"Yes. They are all descriptive—*'pointed,' 'acute,' 'obtuse,' 'truncate,' 'notched,'* and so on," answered Helen. "Did you notice a minute ago that I spoke of the 'leaflet' of a horse-chestnut leaf? What's the difference between a 'leaflet' and a 'leaf'?"

"To judge by what you said, a leaflet must be a part of a leaf. One of the five fingers of the horse-chestnut leaf is a leaflet," Della reasoned out in answer.

Obtuse Truncated Notched

"Can you think of any other leaves that have leaflets?"

"A locust?"

"A rose?"

Pinnate
Locust Leaf

Pinnate, tendrils
Sweet Pea Leaf

"A sweetpea?"

The latter answer-question came from Roger and produced a laugh.

"All those are right. The leaves that are made up

of leaflets are called *'compound'* leaves, and the ones that aren't compound are *'simple.'* "

"Most leaves are simple," decided Ethel Brown.

"There are more simple than compound," agreed Helen. "As you recall them do you see any resemblance between the shape of the horse-chestnut leaf and the shape of the rose leaf and anything else we've been talking about this afternoon?"

"Helen is just naturally headed for the teaching profession!" exclaimed James in an undertone.

Helen flushed.

"I do seem to be asking about a million questions, don't I?" she responded good naturedly.

"The rose leaf is feather-shaped and the horse-chestnut is palm-shaped," Ethel Blue thought aloud, frowning delicately as she spoke. "They're like those different kinds of veining."

"That's it exactly," commended her cousin. "Those leaves are *'pinnately compound'* and *'palmately compound'* according as their leaflets are arranged like a feather or like the palm of your hand. When you begin to notice the edges of leaves you see that there is about every degree of cutting between the margin that is quite smooth and the margin that is so deeply cut that it is almost a compound leaf. It is never a real compound leaf, though, unless the leaflets are truly separate and all belong on one common stalk."

"My lily of the valley leaf has a perfectly smooth edge," said Ethel Blue.

"That is called *'entire.'* This elm leaf of mine has a *'serrate'* edge with the teeth pointing forward

like the teeth of a saw. When they point outward like the spines of a holly leaf they are *'dentate'*-toothed. The border of a nasturtium leaf is *'crenate'* or scalloped. Most honeysuckles have a *'wavy'* margin. When there are sharp, deep notches such as there are on the upper leaves of the field daisy, the edge is called *'cut.'*"

"This oak leaf is 'cut,' then."

"When the cuts are as deep as those the leaf is *'cleft.'* When they go about half way to the mid-

Dentate

Wavy

rib, as in the hepatica, it is *'lobed,'* and when they almost reach the midrib as they do in the poppy it is *'parted.'*"

"Which makes me think our ways must part if James and I are to get home in time for dinner," said Margaret.

"There's our werwolf down in the field again," exclaimed Dorothy, peering through the bushes toward the meadow where a man was stooping and standing, examining what he took up from the ground.

"Let's go through the field and see what he's do-

ing," exclaimed Roger. "He's been here so many times he must have some purpose."

But when they passed him he was merely looking at a flower through a small magnifying glass. He said "Good-afternoon" to them, and they saw as they looked back, that he kept on with his bending and rising and examination.

"He's like us, students of botany," laughed Ethel Blue. "We ought to have asked him to Helen's class this afternoon."

"I don't like his looks," Dorothy decided. "He makes me uncomfortable. I wish he wouldn't come here."

Roger turned back to take another look and shook his head thoughtfully.

"Me neither," he remarked concisely, and then added as if to take the thoughts of the girls off the subject, "Here's a wild strawberry plant for your indoor strawberry bed, Ethel Brown," and launched into the recitation of an anonymous poem he had recently found.

"The moon is up, the moon is up!
The larks begin to fly,
And, like a drowsy buttercup,
Dark Phœbus skims the sky,
The elephant with cheerful voice,
Sings blithely on the spray;
The bats and beetles all rejoice,
Then let me, too, be gay."

CHAPTER X

THE U. S. C. AND THE COMMUNITY

ROGER'S interest in gardening had extended far beyond fertilizers and sweetpeas. It was not long after the discussion in which the Mortons' garden had been planned on paper that he happened to mention to the master of the high school, Mr. Wheeler, what the Club was intending to do. Mr. Wheeler had learned to value the enthusiasm and persistency of the U. S. C. members and it did not take him long to decide that he wanted their assistance in putting through a piece of work that would be both pleasant and profitable for the whole community.

"It seems queer that here in Rosemont where we are on the very edge of the country there should be any people who do not have gardens," he said to Roger.

"There are, though," responded Roger. "I was walking down by the station the other day where those shanties are that the mill hands live in and I noticed that not one of them had space for more than a plant or two and they seemed to be so discouraged at the prospect that even the plant or two wasn't there."

"Yet all the children that live in those houses go to our public schools. Now my idea is that we should

have a community garden, planted and taken care of by the school children."

"Bully!" exclaimed Roger enthusiastically. "Where are you going to get your land?"

"That's the question. It ought to be somewhere near the graded school, and there isn't any ploughed land about there. The only vacant land there is is that cheerful spot that used to be the dump."

"Isn't that horrible! One corner of it is right behind the house where my aunt Louise lives. Fortunately there's a thick hedge that shuts it off."

"Still it's there, and I imagine she'd be glad enough to have it made into a pleasant sight instead of an eyesore."

"You mean that the dump might be made into the garden?"

"If we can get people like Mrs. Smith who are personally affected by it, and others who have the benefit of the community at heart to contribute toward clearing off the ground and having it fertilized I believe that would be the right place."

"You can count on Aunt Louise, I know. She'd be glad to help. Anybody would. Why it would turn that terrible looking spot into almost a park!"

"The children would prepare the gardens once the soil was put into something like fair condition, but the first work on that lot is too heavy even for the larger boys."

"They could pick up the rubbish on top."

"Yes, they could do that, and the town carts could carry it away and burn it. The town would give us the street sweepings all spring and summer and some

of the people who have stables would contribute fertilizer. Once that was turned under with the spade and topped off by some commercial fertilizer with a dash of lime to sweeten matters, the children could do the rest."

"What is your idea about having the children taught? Will the regular teachers do it?"

"All the children have some nature study, and simple gardening can be run into that, our superintendent tells me. Then I know something about gardening and I'll gladly give some time to the outdoor work."

"I'd like to help, too," said Roger unassumingly, "if you think I know enough."

"If you're going to have a share in planting and working three gardens I don't see why you can't keep sufficiently ahead of the children to be able to show them what to do. We'd be glad to have your help," and Mr. Wheeler shook hands cordially with his new assistant.

Roger was not the only member of his family interested in the new plan. His Grandfather was public-spirited and at a meeting of citizens called for the purpose of proposing the new community venture he offered money, fertilizer, seeds, and the services of a man for two days to help in the first clearing up. Others followed his example, one citizen giving a liberal sum of money toward the establishment of an incinerator which should replace in part the duties of the dump, and another heading a subscription list for the purchase of a fence which should keep out stray animals and boys whose interests might be awakened

at the time the vegetables ripened rather than during the days of preparation and backache. Mrs. Smith answered her nephew's expectations by adding to the fund. The town contributed the lot, and supported the new work generously in more than one way.

When it came to the carrying out of details Mr. Wheeler made further demands upon the Club. He asked the boys to give some of their Saturday time to spreading the news of the proposed garden among the people who might contribute and also the people who might want to have their children benefit by taking the new "course of study." Although James and Tom did not live in Rosemont they were glad to help and for several Saturdays the Club tramps were utilized as a means of spreading the good news through the outskirts of the town.

The girls were placed among the workers when the day came to register the names of the children who wanted to undertake the plots. There were so many of them that there was plenty to do for both the Ethels and for Dorothy and Helen, who assisted Mr. Wheeler. The registration was based on the catalogue plan. For each child there was a card, and on it the girls wrote his name and address, his grade in school and a number corresponding to the number of one of the plots into which the big field was divided. It did not take him long to understand that on the day when the garden was to open he was to hunt up his plot and that after that he and his partner were to be responsible for everything that happened to it.

Two boys or two girls were assigned to each plot

but more children applied than there were plots to distribute. The Ethels were disturbed about this at first for it seemed a shame that any one who wanted to make a garden should not have the opportunity. Helen reminded them, however, that there might be some who would find their interest grow faint when the days grew hot and long and the weeds seemed to wax tall at a faster rate than did the desirable plants.

"When some of these youngsters fall by the wayside we can supply their places from the waiting list," she said.

"There won't be so many fall by the wayside if there is a waiting list," prophesied her Aunt Louise who had come over to the edge of the ground to see how popular the new scheme proved to be. "It's human nature to want to stick if you think that some one else is waiting to take your place."

The beds were sixteen feet long and five feet wide and a path ran all around. This permitted every part of the bed to be reached by hand, and did away with the necessity of stepping on it. It was decreed that all the plots were to be edged with flowers, but the workers might decide for themselves what they should be. The planters of the first ten per cent. of the beds that showed seedlings were rewarded by being allowed the privilege of planting the vines and tall blossoming plants that were to cover the inside of the fence.

Most of the plots were given over to vegetables, even those cared for by small children, for the addition of a few extras to the family table was more to be desired than the bringing home of a bunch of

flowers, but even the most provident children had the pleasure of picking the white candytuft or blue ageratum, or red and yellow dwarf nasturtiums that formed the borders.

Once a week each plot received a visit from some one qualified to instruct the young farmer and the condition of the plot was indicated on his card. Here, too, and on the duplicate card which was filed in the schoolhouse, the child's attendance record was kept, and also the amount of seed he used and the extent of the crop he harvested. In this way the cost of each of the little patches was figured quite closely. As it turned out, some of the children who were not blessed with many brothers and sisters, sold a good many dimes' worth of vegetables in the course of the summer.

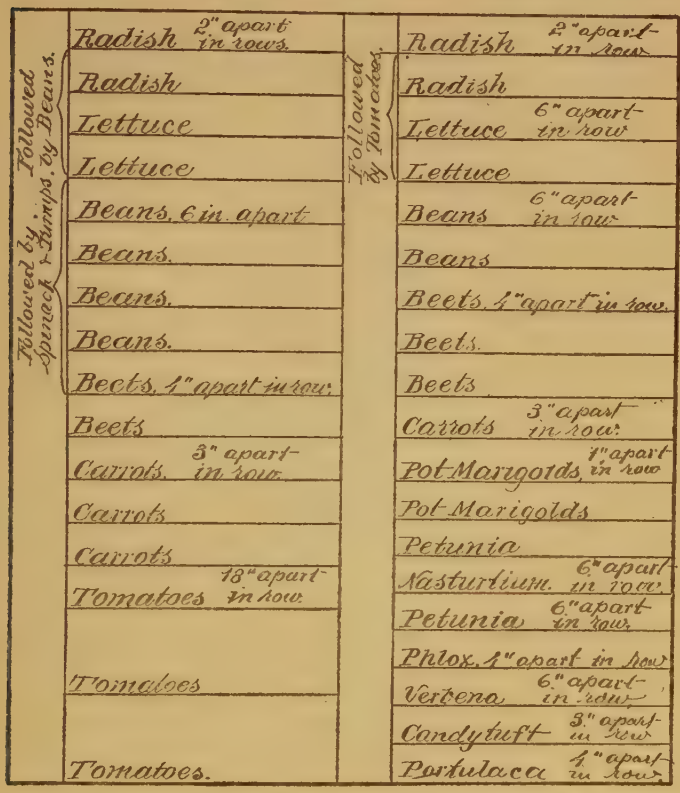
"This surely is a happy sight!" exclaimed Mr. Emerson to his wife as he passed one day and stopped to watch the children at work, some, just arrived, getting their tools from the toolhouse in one corner of the lot, others already hard at work, some hoeing, some on their knees weeding, all as contented as they were busy.

"Come in, come in," urged Mr. Wheeler, who noticed them looking over the fence. "Come in and see how your grandson's pupils are progressing."

The Emersons were eager to accept the invitation.

"Here is the plan we've used in laying out the beds," explained Mr. Wheeler, showing them a copy of a Bulletin issued by the Department of Agriculture. "Roger and I studied over it a long time and we came to the conclusion that we couldn't better this.

This one is all vegetables, you see, and that has been chosen by most of the youngsters. Some of the girls,



Plan of a vegetable school garden

Plan of a combined vegetable and flower school garden

though, wanted more flowers, so they have followed this one."

"This vegetable arrangement is the one I've followed at home," said Roger, "only mine is larger. Dicky's garden is just this size."

"Would there be any objection to my offering a small prize?" asked Mr. Emerson.

"None at all."

"Then I'd like to give some packages of seeds—as many as you think would be suitable—to the partners who make the most progress in the first month."

"And I'd like to give a bundle of flower seeds to the border that is in the most flourishing condition by the first of August," added Mrs. Emerson.

"And the United Service Club would like to give some seeds for the earliest crop of vegetables harvested from any plot," promised Roger, taking upon himself the responsibility of the offer which he was sure the other members would confirm.

Mr. Wheeler thanked them all and assured them that notice of the prizes would be given at once so that the competition might add to the present enthusiasm.

"Though it would be hard to do that," he concluded, smiling with satisfaction.

"No fair planting corn in the kitchen and transplanting it the way I'm doing at home," decreed Roger, enlarging his stipulations concerning the Club offer.

"I understand; the crop must be raised here from start to finish," replied Mr. Wheeler.

The interest of the children in the garden and of their parents and the promoters in general in the improvement that they had made in the old town dump was so great that the Ethels were inspired with an idea that would accomplish even more desirable

changes. The suggestion was given at one of the Saturday meetings of the Club.

"You know how horrid the grounds around the railroad station are," Ethel Blue reminded them.

"There's some grass," objected Roger.

"A tiny patch, and right across the road there are ugly weeds. I think that if we put it up to the people of Rosemont right now they'd be willing to do something about making the town prettier by planting in a lot of conspicuous places."

"Where besides the railroad station?" inquired Helen.

"Can you ask? Think of the Town Hall! There isn't a shrub within a half mile."

"And the steps of the high school," added Ethel Brown. "You go over them every day for ten months, so you're so accustomed to them that you don't see that they're as ugly as ugly. They ought to have bushes planted at each side to bank them from sight."

"I dare say you're right," confessed Helen, while Roger nodded assent and murmured something about Japan ivy.

"Some sort of vine at all the corners would be splendid," insisted Ethel Brown. "Ethel Blue and Dorothy and I planted Virginia Creeper and Japan ivy and clematis wherever we could against the graded school building; didn't we tell you? The principal said we might; he took the responsibility and we provided the plants and did the planting."

"He said he wished we could have some rhodo-

dendrons and mountain laurel for the north side of the building, and some evergreen azalea bushes, but he didn't know where we'd get them, because he had asked the committee for them once and they had said that they were spending all their money on the inside of the children's heads and that the outside of the building would have to look after itself."

"That's just the spirit the city fathers have been showing about the park. They've actually got that started, though," said Roger gratefully.

"They're doing hardly any work on it; I went by there yesterday," reported Dorothy. "It's all laid out, and I suppose they've planted grass seed for there are places that look as if they might be lawns in the dim future."

"Too bad they couldn't afford to sod them," remarked James, wisely.

"If they'd set out clumps of shrubs at the corners and perhaps put a carpet of pansies under them it would help," declared Ethel Blue, who had consulted with the Glen Point nurseryman one afternoon when the Club went there to see Margaret and James.

"Why don't we make a roar about it?" demanded Roger. "Ethel Blue had the right idea when she said that now was the time to take advantage of the citizens' interest. If we could in some way call their attention to the high school and the Town Hall and the railroad station and the park."

"And tell them that the planting at the graded school as far as it goes, was done by three little girls," suggested Tom, grinning at the disgusted faces with which the Ethels and Dorothy heard themselves

called "little girls"; "that ought to put them to shame."

"Isn't the easiest way to call their attention to it to have a piece in the paper?" asked Ethel Brown.

"You've hit the right idea," approved James. "If your editor is like the Glen Point editor he'll be glad of a new crusade to undertake."

"Particularly if it's backed by your grandfather," added Della shrewdly.

The result of this conference of the Club was that they laid the whole matter before Mr. Emerson and found that it was no trouble at all to enlist his interest.

"If you're interested right off why won't other people be?" asked Ethel Brown when it was clear that her grandfather would lend his weight to anything they undertook.

"I believe they will be, and I think you have the right idea about making a beginning. Go to Mr. Montgomery, the editor of the Rosemont *Star*, and say that I sent you to lay before him the needs of this community in the way of added beauty. Tell him to 'play it up' so that the Board of Trade will get the notion through their heads that people will be attracted to live here if they see lovely grounds about them. He'll think of other appeals. Go to see him."

The U. S. C. never let grass grow under its feet. The Ethels and Dorothy, Roger and Helen went to the office of the *Star* that very afternoon.

"You seem to be a delegation," said the editor, receiving them with a smile.

"We represent our families, who are citizens of Rosemont," answered Roger, "and who want your help, and we also represent the United Service Club which is ready to help you help them."

"I know you!" responded Mr. Montgomery genially. "Your club is well named. You've already done several useful things for Rosemont people and institutions. What is it now?"

Roger told him to the last detail, even quoting Tom's remark about the "three little girls," and adding some suggestions about town prizes for front door yards which the Ethels had poured into his ears as they came up the stairs. While he was talking the editor made some notes on a pad lying on his desk. The Ethels were afraid that that meant that he was not paying much attention, and they glanced at each other with growing disappointment. When Roger stopped, however, Mr. Montgomery nodded gravely.

"I shall be very glad indeed to lend the weight of the *Star* toward the carrying out of your proposition," he remarked, seeming not to notice the bounce of delight that the younger girls could not resist. "What would you think of a series of editorials, each striking a different note?" and he read from his pad;—Survey of Rosemont; Effect of Appearance of Railroad Station, Town Hall, etc., on Strangers; Value of Beauty as a Reinforcement to Good Roads and Good Schools. "That is, as an extra attraction for drawing new residents," he explained. "We have good roads and good schools, but I can conceive of people who might say that they would have to be a lot better than they are before they'd live in a town

where the citizens had no more idea of the fitness of things than to have a dump heap almost in the heart of the town and to let the Town Hall look like a jail."

The listening party nodded their agreement with the force of this argument.

" 'What Three Little Girls Have Done,' " read Mr. Montgomery. "I'll invite any one who is interested to take a look at the graded schoolhouse and see how much better it looks as a result of what has been accomplished there. I know, because I live right opposite it, and I'm much obliged to you young ladies."

He bowed so affably in the direction of the Ethels and Dorothy, and "young ladies" sounded so pleasantly in their ears that they were disposed to forgive him for the "little girls" of his title.

"I have several other topics here," he went on, "some appealing to our citizens' love of beauty and some to their notions of commercial values. If we keep this thing up every day for a week and meanwhile work up sentiment, I shouldn't wonder if we had some one calling a public meeting at the end of the week. If no one else does I'll do it myself," he added amusedly.

"What can we do?" asked Ethel Brown, who always went straight to the practical side.

"Stir up sentiment. You stirred your grandfather; stir all your neighbors; talk to all your schoolmates and get them to talk at home about the things you tell them. I'll send a reporter to write up a little 'story' about the U. S. C. with a twist on the

end that the grown-ups ought not to leave a matter like this for youngsters to handle, no matter how well they would do it."

"But we'd like to handle it," stammered Ethel Blue.

"You'll have a chance; you needn't be afraid of that. The willing horse may always pull to the full extent of his strength. But the citizens of Rosemont ought not to let a public matter like this be financed by a few kids," and Mr. Montgomery tossed his notebook on his desk with a force that hinted that he had had previous encounters with an obstinate element in his chosen abiding place.

The scheme that he had outlined was followed out to the letter, with additions made as they occurred to the ingenious minds of the editor or of his clever young reporters who took an immense delight in running under the guise of news items, bits of reminder, gentle gibes at slowness, bland comments on ignorance of the commercial value of beauty, mild jokes at letting children do men's work. It was all so good-natured that no one took offence, and at the same time no one who read the *Star* had the opportunity to forget that seed had been sown.

It germinated even more promptly than Mr. Montgomery had prophesied. He knew that Mr. Emerson stood ready to call a mass meeting at any moment that he should tell him that the time was ripe, but both he and Mr. Emerson thought that the call might be more effective if it came from a person who really had been converted by the articles in the paper. This person came to the front but five

days after the appearance of the first editorial in the surprising person of the alderman who had been foremost in opposing the laying out of the park.

"You may think me a weathercock," he said rather sheepishly to Mr. Montgomery, "but when I make up my mind that a thing is desirable I put my whole strength into putting it through. When I finally gave my vote for the park I was really converted to the park project and I tell you I've been just frothing because the other aldermen have been so slow about putting it in order. I haven't been able to get them to appropriate half enough for it."

Mr. Montgomery smothered a smile, and listened, unruffled, to his caller's proposal.

"My idea now," he went on, "is to call a mass meeting in the Town Hall some day next week, the sooner the better. I'll be the chairman or Mr. Emerson or you, I don't care who it is. We'll put before the people all the points you've taken up in your articles. We'll get people who understand the different topics to talk about them—some fellow on the commercial side and some one else on the beauty side and so on; and we'll have the Glen Point nurseryman—"

"We ought to have one over here," interposed Mr. Montgomery."

"We will if this goes through. There's a new occupation opened here at once by this scheme! We'll have him give us a rough estimate of how much it would cost to make the most prominent spots in Rosemont look decent instead of like a deserted

ranch," exclaimed the alderman, becoming increasingly enthusiastic.

"I don't know that I'd call Rosemont that," objected the editor. "People don't like to have their towns abused too much; but if you can work up sentiment to have those public places fixed up and then you can get to work on some sort of plan for prizes for the prettiest front yards and the best grown vines over doors and so on, and raise some competitive feeling I believe we'll have no more trouble than we did about the school gardens. It just takes some one to start the ball rolling, and you're the person to do it," and tactful Mr. Montgomery laid an approving hand on the shoulder of the pleased alderman.

If it had all been cut and dried it could not have worked out better. The meeting was packed with citizens who proved to be so full of enthusiasm that they did not stand in need of conversion. They moved, seconded and passed resolution after resolution urging the aldermen to vote funds for improvements and they mentioned spots in need of improvement and means of improving them that U. S. C. never would have had the courage to suggest.

"We certainly are indebted to you young people for a big move toward benefiting Rosemont," said Mr. Montgomery to the Club as he passed the settee where they were all seated together. "It's going to be one of the beauty spots of New Jersey before this summer is over!"

"And the Ethels are the authors of the idea!" murmured Tom Watkins, applauding silently, as the girls blushed.

CHAPTER XI

THE FLOWER FESTIVAL

THE idea of having a town flower-costume party was the Ethels', too. It came to them when contributions were beginning to flag, just as they discovered that the grounds around the fire engine house were a disgrace to a self-respecting community, as their emphatic friend, the alderman, described them.

"People are always willing to pay for fun," Ethel Brown said, "and this ought to appeal to them because the money that is made by the party will go back to them by being spent for the town."

Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Emerson and Mrs. Smith thought the plan was possible, and they offered to enlist the interest of the various clubs and societies to which they belonged. The schools were closed now so that there was no opportunity of advertising the entertainment through the school children, but all the clergymen co-operated heartily in every way in their power and Mr. Montgomery gave the plan plenty of free advertising, not only in the advertising columns but through the means of reading notices which his reporters prepared with as much interest and skill as they had shown in working up public opinion on the general improvement scheme.

"It must be in the school house hall so everybody will go," declared Helen.

"Why not use the hall and the grounds, too?" inquired Ethel Blue. "If it's a fine evening there are various things that would be prettier to have out of doors than indoors."

"The refreshments, for instance," explained Ethel Brown. "Every one would rather eat his ice cream and cake at a table on the lawn in front of the schoolhouse than inside where it may be stuffy if it happens to be a warm night."

"Lanterns on the trees and candles on each table would make light enough," decided Ethel Blue.

"There could be a Punch and Judy show in a tent at the side of the schoolhouse," suggested Dorothy.

"What is there flowery about a Punch and Judy show?" asked Roger scornfully.

"Nothing at all," returned Dorothy meekly, "but for some reason or other people always like a Punch and Judy show."

"Where are we going to get a tent?"

"A tent would be awfully warm," Ethel Brown decided. "Why couldn't we have it in the corner where there is a fence on two sides? We could lace boughs back and forth between the palings and make the fence higher, and on the other two sides borrow or buy some wide chicken wire from the hardware store and make that eye-proof with branches."

"And string an electric light wire over them. I begin to get enthusiastic," cried Roger. "We could amuse, say, a hundred people at a time at ten cents apiece, in the side-show corner and keep them away from the other more crowded regions."

"Exactly," agreed Dorothy; "and if you can think

of any other side show that the people will like better than Punch and Judy, why, put it in instead."

"We might have finger shadows—rabbits' and dogs' heads and so on; George Foster does them splendidly, and then have some one recite and some one else do a monologue in costume."

"Aren't we going to have that sort of thing inside?"

"I suppose so, but if your idea is to give more space inside, considering that all Rosemont is expected to come to this festivity, we might as well have a performance in two rings, so to speak."

"Especially as some of the people might be a little shy about coming inside," suggested Dorothy.

"Why not forget Punch and Judy and have the same performance exactly in both places?" demanded Roger, quite excited with his idea. "The Club gives a flower dance, for instance, in the hall; then they go into the yard and give it there in the ten cent enclosure while number two of the program is on the platform inside. When number two is done inside it is put on outside, and so right through the whole performance."

"That's not bad except that the outside people are paying ten cents to see the show and the inside people aren't paying anything."

"Well, then, why not have the tables where you sell things—if you are going to have any?"—

"We are," Helen responded to the question in her brother's voice.

"—have your tables on the lawn, and have every-

body pay to see the performance—ten cents to go inside or ten cents to see the same thing in the enclosure?"

"That's the best yet," decided Ethel Brown. "That will go through well if only it is pleasant weather."

"I feel in my bones it will be," and Ethel Blue laughed hopefully.

The appointed day was fair and not too warm. The whole U. S. C. which went on duty at the school house early in the day, pronounced the behavior of the weather to be exactly what it ought to be.

The boys gave their attention to the arrangement of the screen of boughs in the corner of the school lot, and the girls, with Mrs. Emerson, Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Smith, decorated the hall. Flowers were to be sold everywhere, both indoors and out, so there were various tables about the room and they all had contributed vases of different sorts to hold the blossoms.

"I must say, I don't think these look pretty a bit," confessed Dorothy, gazing with her head on one side at a large bowl of flowers of all colors that she had placed in the middle of one of the tables.

Her mother looked at it and smiled.

"Don't try to show off your whole stock at once," she advised. "Have a few arranged in the way that shows them to the best advantage and let Ethel Blue draw a poster stating that there are plenty more behind the scenes. Have your supply at the back or under the table in large jars and bowls and replenish your vases as soon as you sell their contents."

The Ethels and Dorothy thought this was a sensible way of doing things and said so, and Ethel Blue at once set about the preparation of three posters drawn on brown wrapping paper and showing a girl holding a flower and saying "We have plenty more like this. Ask for them." They proved to be very pretty and were put up in the hall and the outside enclosure and on the lawn.

"There are certain kinds of flowers that should always be kept low," explained Mrs. Smith as they all sorted over the cut flowers that had been contributed. "Flowers that grow directly from the ground like crocuses or jonquils or daffodils or narcissus—the spring bulbs—should be set into flat bowls through netting that will hold them upright. There are bowls sold for this purpose."

"Don't they call them 'pansy bowls'?"

"I have heard them called that. Some of them have a pierced china top; others have a silver netting. You can make a top for a bowl of any size by cutting chicken wire to suit your needs."

"I should think a low-growing plant like ageratum would be pretty in a vase of that sort."

"It would, and pansies, of course, and anemones—windflowers—held upright by very fine netting and nodding in every current of air as if they were still in the woods."

"I think I'll make a covering for a glass bowl we have at home," declared Ethel Brown, who was diligently snipping ends of stems as she listened.

"A glass bowl doesn't seem to me suitable," answered her aunt. "Can you guess why?"

Ethel Brown shook her head with a murmured "No." It was Della who offered an explanation.

"The stems aren't pretty enough to look at," she suggested. "When you use a glass bowl or vase the stems you see through it ought to be graceful."

"I think so," responded Mrs. Smith. "That's why we always take pleasure in a tall slender glass vase holding a single rose with a long stem still bearing a few leaves. We get the effect that it gives us out of doors."

"That's what we like to see," agreed Mrs. Morton. "Narcissus springing from a low bowl is an application of the same idea. So are these few sprays of clematis waving from a vase made to hang on the wall. They aren't crowded; they fall easily; they look happy."

"And in a room you would select a vase that would harmonize with the coloring," added Margaret, who was mixing sweetpeas in loose bunches with feathery gypsophila.

"When we were in Japan Dorothy and I learned something about the Japanese notions of flower arrangement," continued Mrs. Smith. "They usually use one very beautiful dominating blossom. If others are added they are not competing for first place but they act as helpers to add to the beauty of the main attraction."

"We've learned some of the Japanese ways," said Mrs. Emerson. "I remember when people always made a bouquet perfectly round and of as many kinds of flowers as they could put into it."

"People don't make 'bouquets' now; they gather a 'bunch of flowers,' or they give you a single bloom," smiled her daughter. "But isn't it true that we get as much pleasure out of a single superb chrysanthemum or rose as we do out of a great mass of them?"

"There are times when I like masses," admitted Mrs. Emerson. "I like flowers of many kinds if the colors are harmoniously arranged, and I like a mantelpiece banked with the kind of flowers that give you pleasure when you see them in masses in the garden or the greenhouse."

"If the vases they are in don't show," warned Mrs. Smith.

Mrs. Emerson agreed to that.

"The choice of vases is almost as important as the choice of flowers," she added. "If the stems are beautiful they ought to show and you must have a transparent vase, as you said about the rose. If the stems are not especially worthy of admiration the better choice is an opaque vase of china or pottery."

"Or silver or copper?" questioned Margaret.

"Metals and blossoms never seem to me to go well together," confessed Mrs. Emerson. "I have seen a copper cup with a bunch of violets loosely arranged so that they hung over the edge and the copper glinted through the blossoms and leaves and the effect was lovely; but flowers to be put into metal must be chosen with that in mind and arranged with especial care."

"Metal *jardinières* don't seem suitable to me, either," confessed Mrs. Emerson. "There are so

many beautiful potteries now that it is possible to find something harmonious for every flowerpot."

"You don't object to a silver centrepiece on the dining table, do you?"

"That's the only place where it doesn't seem out of place," smiled Mrs. Emerson. "There are so many other pieces of silver on the table that it is merely one of the articles of table equipment and therefore is not conspicuous. Not a standing vase, mind you!" she continued. "I don't know anything more irritating than to have to dodge about the centrepiece to see your opposite neighbor. It's a terrible bar to conversation."

They all had experienced the same discomfort, and they all laughed at the remembrance.

"A low bowl arranged flat is the rule for centrepieces," repeated Mrs. Emerson seriously.

"Mother always says that gay flowers are the city person's greatest help in brightening up a dark room," said Della as she laid aside all the calliopsis from the flowers she was sorting. "I'm going to take a bunch of this home to her to-night."

"I always have yellow or white or pink flowers in the dark corner of our sitting room," said Mrs. Smith. "The blue ones or the deep red ones or the ferns may have the sunny spots."

"Father insists on yellow blossoms of some kind in the library," added Mrs. Emerson. "He says they are as good as another electric light to brighten the shadowy side where the bookcases are."

"I remember seeing a gay array of window boxes at Stratford-on-Avon, once upon a time," contributed

Mrs. Morton. "It was a sunshiny day when I saw them, but they were well calculated to enliven the very grayest weather that England can produce. I was told that the house belonged to Marie Corelli, the novelist."

"What plants did she have?" asked Dorothy.

"Blue lobelia and scarlet geraniums and some frisky little yellow bloom; I couldn't see exactly what it was."

"Red and yellow and blue," repeated Ethel Brown. "Was it pretty?"

"Very. Plenty of each color and all the boxes alike all over the front of the house."

"We shouldn't need such vividness under our brilliant American skies," commented Mrs. Smith. "Plenty of green with flowers of one color makes a window box in the best of taste, to my way of thinking."

"And that color one that is becoming to the house, so to speak," smiled Helen. "I saw a yellow house the other day that had yellow flowers in the window boxes. They were almost extinguished by their background."

"I saw a white one in Glen Point with white daisies, and the effect was the same," added Margaret. "The poor little flowers were lost. There are ivies and some small evergreen shrubs that the greenhousemen raise especially for winter window boxes now. I've been talking a lot with the nurseryman at Glen Point and he showed me some the other day that he warranted to keep fresh-looking all through the cold weather unless there were blizzards."

"We must remember those at Sweetbrier Lodge," Mrs. Smith said to Dorothy.

"Why don't you give a talk on arranging flowers as part of the program this evening?" Margaret asked Mrs. Smith.

"Do, Aunt Louise. You really ought to," urged Helen, and the Ethels added their voices.

"Give a short talk and illustrate it by the examples the girls have been arranging," Mrs. Morton added, and when Mrs. Emerson said that she thought the little lecture would have real value as well as interest Mrs. Smith yielded.

"Say what you and Grandmother have been telling us and you won't need to add another thing," cried Helen. "I think it will be the very best number on the program."

"I don't believe it will compete with the side show in the yard," laughed Mrs. Smith, "but I'm quite willing to do it if you think it will give any one pleasure."

"But you'll be part of the side show in the yard," and they explained the latest plan of running the program.

When the flowers had all been arranged to their satisfaction the girls went into the yard where they found the tables and chairs placed for the serving of the refreshments. The furniture had been supplied by the local confectioner who was to furnish the ice cream and give the management a percentage of what was received. The cake was all supplied by the ladies of the town and the money obtained from its sale was clear profit.

The girls covered the bleakness of the plain tables by placing a centrepiece of radiating ferns flat on the wood. On that stood a small vase, each one having flowers of but one color, and each one having a different color.

Under the trees among the refreshment tables, but not in their way, were the sales tables. On one, cut flowers were to be sold; on another, potted plants, and a special corner was devoted to wild plants from the woods. A seedsman had given them a liberal supply of seeds to sell on commission, agreeing to take back all that were not sold and to contribute one per cent. more than he usually gave to his sales people, "for the good of the cause."

Every one in the whole town who raised vegetables had contributed to the Housewives' Table, and as the names of the donors were attached the table had all the attraction of an exhibit at a county fair and was surrounded all the time by so many men that the women who bought the vegetables for home use had to be asked to come back later to get them, so that the discussion of their merits among their growers might continue with the specimens before them.

"That's a hint for another year," murmured Ethel Blue to Ethel Brown. "We can have a make-believe county fair and charge admission, and give medals—"

"Of pasteboard."

"Exactly. I'm glad we thought to have a table of the school garden products; all the parents will be enormously interested. It will bring them here, and

they won't be likely to go away without spending a nickel or a dime on ice cream."

A great part of the attractiveness of the grounds was due to the contribution of a dealer in garden furniture. In return for being allowed to put up advertisements of his stock in suitable places where they would not be too conspicuous, he furnished several artistic settees, an arbor or two and a small pergola, which the Glen Point greenhouseman decorated in return for a like use of his advertising matter.

Still another table, under the care of Mrs. Montgomery, the wife of the editor, showed books on flowers and gardens and landscape gardening and took subscriptions for several of the garden and home magazines. Last of all a fancy table was covered with dolls and paper dolls dressed like the participants in the floral procession that was soon to form and pass around the lawn; lamp shades in the form of huge flowers; hats, flower-trimmed; and half a hundred other small articles including many for ten, fifteen and twenty-five cents to attract the children.

At five o'clock the Flower Festival was opened and afternoon tea was served to the early comers. All the members of the United Service Club and the other boys and girls of the town who helped them wore flower costumes. It was while the Ethels were serving Mrs. Smith and the Miss Clarks that the latter called their attention to a man who sat at a table not far away.

"That man is your rival," they announced, smiling, to Mrs. Smith.

"My rival! How is that?" inquired Mrs. Smith.

"He wants to buy the field."

They all exclaimed and looked again at the man who sat quietly eating his ice cream as if he had no such dreadful intentions. The Ethels, however, recognized him as he pushed back a lock of hair that fell over his forehead.

"Why, that's our werwolf!" they exclaimed after taking a good look at him, and they explained how they had seen him several times in the field, always digging a stick into the ground and examining what it brought up.

"He says he's a botanist, and he finds so much to interest him in the field that he wants to buy it so that he may feel free to work there," said Miss Clark the younger.

"That's funny," commented Ethel Blue. "He almost never looks at any flowers or plants. He just pokes his stick in and that's all."

"He offered us a considerable sum for the property but we told him that you had an option on it, Mrs. Smith, and we explained that we couldn't give title anyway."

"Did his interest seem to fail?"

"He asked us a great many questions and we told him all about our aunt and the missing cousin. I thought you might be interested to know that some one else besides yourself sees some good in the land."

"It's so queer," said the other Miss Clark. "That land has never had an offer made for it and here we have two within a few weeks of each other."

"And we can't take advantage of either of them!"

The Ethels noticed later on that the man was

joined by a girl about their own age. They looked at her carefully so that they would recognize her again if they saw her, and they also noticed that the werwolf, as he talked to her, so often pushed back from his forehead the lock of hair that fell over it that it had become a habit.

The full effect of the flower costumes was seen after the lanterns were lighted, when some of the young married women attended to the tables while their youngers marched around the lawn that all might see the costumes and be attracted to the entertainment in the hall and behind the screen in the open.

Roger led the procession, impersonating "Spring."

"That's a new one to me," ejaculated the editor of the *Star* in surprise. "I always thought 'Spring' was of the feminine gender."

"Not this year," returned Roger merrily as he passed by.

He was dressed like a tree trunk in a long brown cambric robe that fitted him closely and gave him at the foot only the absolute space that he needed for walking. He carried real apple twigs almost entirely stripped of their leaves and laden with blossoms made of white and pink paper. The effect was of a generously flowering apple tree and every one recognized it.

Behind Roger came several of the spring blossoms —the Ethels first, representing the yellow crocus and the violet. Ethel Brown wore a white dress covered with yellow gauze sewn with yellow crocuses. A ring of crocuses hung from its edge and a crocus

turned upside down made a fascinating cap. All the flowers were made of tissue paper. Ethel Blue's dress was fashioned in the same way, her violet gauze being covered with violets and her cap a tiny lace affair with a violet border. In her case she was able to use many real violets and to carry a basket of the fresh flowers. The contents was made up of small bunches of buttonhole size and she stepped from the procession at almost every table to sell a bunch to some gentleman sitting there. A scout kept the basket always full.

Sturdy James made a fine appearance in the spring division in the costume of a red and yellow tulip. He wore long green stockings and a striped tulip on each leg constituted his breeches. Another, with the points of the petals turning upwards, made his jacket, and yet another, a small one, upside down, served as a cap. James had been rather averse to appearing in this costume because Margaret had told him he looked bulbous and he had taken it seriously, but he was so applauded that he came to the conclusion that it was worth while to be a bulb if you could be a good one.

Helen led the group of summer flowers. As "Summer" she wore bunches of all the flowers in the garden, arranged harmoniously as in one of the old-fashioned bouquets her grandmother had spoken of in the morning. It had been a problem to keep all these blossoms fresh for it would not be possible for her to wear artificial flowers. The Ethels had found a solution, however, when they brought home one day from the drug store several dozen tiny glass bottles.

Around the neck of each they fastened a bit of wire and bent it into a hook which fitted into an eye sewed on to the old but pretty white frock which Helen was sacrificing to the good cause. After she had put on the dress each one of these bottles was fitted with its flowers which had been picked some time before and revived in warm water and salt so that they would not wilt.

"These bottles make me think of a story our French teacher told us once," Helen laughed as she stood carefully to be made into a bouquet. "There was a real Cyrano de Bergerac who lived in the 17th century. He told a tale supposed to be about his own adventures in which he said that once he fastened about himself a number of phials filled with dew. The heat of the sun attracted them as it does the clouds and raised him high in the air. When he found that he was not going to alight on the moon as he had thought, he broke some of the phials and descended to earth again."

"What a ridiculous story," laughed Ethel Blue, kneeling at Helen's feet with a heap of flowers beside her on the floor.

"The rest of it is quite as foolish. When he landed on the earth again he found that the sun was still shining, although according to his calculation it ought to be midnight; and he also did not recognize the place he dropped upon in spite of the fact that he had apparently gone straight up and fallen straight down. Strange people surrounded him and he had difficulty in making himself understood. After a time he was taken before an official from

whom he learned that on account of the rotation of the earth under him while he was in the air, although he had risen when but two leagues from Paris he had descended in Canada."

The younger girls laughed delightedly at this absurd tale, as they worked at their task. Bits of trailing vine fell from glass to glass so that none of the holders showed, but a delicate tinkling sounded from them like the water of a brook.

"This gown of yours is certainly successful," decided Margaret, surveying the result of the Ethels' work, "but I dare say it isn't comfortable, so you'd better have another one that you can slip into behind the scenes after you've made the rounds in this."

Helen took the advice and after the procession had passed by, she put on a pretty flowered muslin with pink ribbons.

Dorothy walked immediately behind Helen. She was dressed like a garden lily, her petals wired so that they turned out and up at the tips. She wore yellow stockings and slippers as a reminder of the anthers or pollen boxes on the ends of the stamens of the lilies.

Dicky's costume created as much sensation as Roger's. He was a Jack-in-the-Pulpit. A suit of green striped in two shades fitted him tightly, and over his head he carried his pulpit, a wire frame covered with the same material of which his clothes were made. The shape was exact and he looked so grave as he peered forth from his shelter that his appearance was saluted with hearty hand clapping.

Several of the young people of the town followed

in the Summer division. One of them was a fleur-de-lis, wearing a skirt of green leaf blades and a bodice representing the purple petals of the blossom. George Foster was monkshood, a cambric robe—a "domino"—serving to give the blue color note, and a very correct imitation of the flower's helmet answering the purpose of a head-dress. Gregory Patton was Grass, and achieved one of the successful costumes of the line with a robe that rippled to the ground, green cambric its base, completely covered with grass blades.

"That boy ought to have a companion dressed like a haycock," laughed Mr. Emerson as Gregory passed him.

Margaret led the Autumn division, her dress copied from a chestnut tree and burr. Her kirtle was of the long, slender leaves overlapping each other. The bodice was in the tones of dull yellow found in the velvety inside of the opened burr and of the deep brown of the chestnut itself. This, too, was approved by the onlookers.

Behind her walked Della, a combination of purple asters and golden rod, the rosettes of the former seeming a rich and solid material from which the heads of goldenrod hung in a delicate fringe.

A "long-haired Chrysanthemum" was among the autumn flowers, his tissue paper petals slightly wired to make them stand out, and a stalk of Joe-Pye-Weed strode along with his dull pink corymb proudly elevated above the throng.

All alone as a representative of Winter was Tom Watkins, decorated superbly as a Christmas Tree,

Boughs of Norway spruce were bound upon his arms and legs and covered his body. Shining balls hung from the twigs, tinsel glistened as he passed under the lantern light, and strings of popcorn reached from his head to his feet. There was no question of his popularity among the children. Every small boy who saw him asked if he had a present for him.

The flower procession served to draw the people into the hall and the screened corner. They cheerfully yielded up a dime apiece at the entrance to each place, and when the "show" was over they were re-replaced by another relay of new arrivals, so that the program was gone through twice in the hall and twice in the open in the course of the evening.

A march of all the flowers opened the program. This was not difficult, for all the boys and girls were accustomed to such drills at school, but the effect in costumes under the electric light was very striking. Roger, still dressed as an apple tree, recited Bryant's "Planting of the Apple Tree." Dicky delivered a brief sermon from his pulpit. George Foster ordered the lights out and went behind a screen on which he made shadow finger animals to the delight of every child present. Mrs. Smith gave her little talk on the arrangement of flowers, illustrating it by the examples around the room which were later carried out to the open when she repeated her "turn" in the enclosure. The cartoonist of the *Star* gave a chalk talk on "Famous Men of the Day," reciting an amusing biography of each and sketching his portrait, framed in a rose, a daisy, mountain laurel,

a larkspur or whatever occurred to the artist as he talked.

There was music, for Mr. Schuler, who formerly had taught music in the Rosemont schools and who was now with his wife at Rose House, where the United Service Club was taking care of several poor women and children, had drilled some of his former pupils in flower choruses. One of these, by children of Dicky's age, was especially liked.

Every one was pleased and the financial result was so satisfactory that Rosemont soon began to blossom like the flower from which it was named.

"Team work certainly does pay," commented Roger enthusiastically when the Club met again to talk over the great day.

And every one of them agreed that it did.

CHAPTER XII

ENOUGH TO GIVE AWAY

AT the very beginning of his holidays Stanley Clark had gone to Nebraska to replace the detective who had been vainly trying to find some trace of his father's cousin, Emily Leonard. The young man was eager to have the matter straightened out, both because it was impossible to sell any of the family land unless it were, and because he wanted to please Mrs. Smith and Dorothy, and because his orderly mind was disturbed at there being a legal tangle in his family.

Perhaps he put into his search more clearness of vision than the detective, or perhaps he came to it at a time when he could take advantage of what his predecessor had done;—whatever the reason, he did find a clue and it seemed a strange coincidence that it was only a few days after the Miss Clarks had received the second offer for their field that a letter came to them from their nephew, saying that he had not only discovered the town to which Emily's daughter had gone and the name of the family into which she had been adopted, but had learned the fact that the family had later on removed to the neighborhood of Pittsburg.

"At least, this brings the search somewhat nearer home," Stanley wrote, "but it also complicates it, for 'the neighborhood of Pittsburg' is very vague,

and it covers a large amount of country. However, I am going to start to-night for Pittsburg to see what I can do there. I've grown so accustomed to playing hide-and-seek with Cousin Emily and I'm so pleased with my success so far that I'm hopeful that I may pick up the trail in western Pennsylvania."

The Clarks and the Smiths all shared Stanley's hopefulness, for it did indeed seem wonderful that he should have found the missing evidence after so many weeks of failure by the professional detective, and, if he had traced one step, why not the next?

The success of the gardens planted by the U. S. C. had been remarkable. The plants had grown as if they wanted to please, and when blossoming time came, they bloomed with all their might.

"Do you remember the talk you and I had about Rose House just before the Fresh Air women and children came out?" asked Ethel Blue of her cousin.

Ethel Brown nodded, and Ethel Blue explained the conversation to Dorothy.

"We thought Roger's scheme was pretty hard for us youngsters to carry out and we felt a little uncertain about it, but we made up our minds that people are almost always successful when they *want* like everything to do something and *make up their minds* that they are going to put it through and *learn how* to put it through."

"We've proved it again with the gardens," responded Ethel Brown. "We wanted to have pretty gardens and we made up our minds that we could if we tried and then we learned all we could about them from people and books."

"Just see what Roger knows now about fertilizers!" exclaimed Dorothy in a tone of admiration. "Fertilizers aren't a bit interesting until you think of them as plant food and realize that plants like different kinds of food and try to find out what they are. Roger has studied it out and we've all had the benefit of his knowledge."

"Which reminds me that if we want any flowers at all next week we'd better put on some nitrate of soda this afternoon or this dry weather will ruin them."

"Queer how that goes right to the blossoms and doesn't seem to make the whole plant grow."

"I did a deadly deed to one of my calceolarias," confessed Ethel Blue. "I forgot you mustn't use it after the buds form and I sprinkled away all over the plant just as I had been doing."

"Did you kill the buds?"

"It discouraged them. I ought to have put some crystals on the ground a little way off and let them take it in in the air."

"It doesn't seem as though it were strong enough to do either good or harm, does it? One tablespoonful in two gallons of water!"

"Grandfather says he wouldn't ask for plants to blossom better than ours are doing." Ethel Brown repeated the compliment with just pride.

"It's partly because we've loved to work with them and loved them," insisted Ethel Blue. "Everything you love answers back. If you hate your work it's just like hating people; if you don't like a girl she doesn't like you and you feel uncomfortable out-

side and inside; if you don't like your work it doesn't go well."

"What do you know about hating?" demanded Dorothy, giving Ethel Blue a hug.

Ethel flushed.

"I know a lot about it," she insisted. "Some days I just despise arithmetic and on those days I never can do anything right; but when I try to see some sense in it I get along better."

They all laughed, for Ethel Blue's struggles with mathematics were calculated to arouse sympathy even in a hardened breast.

"It's all true," agreed Helen, who had been listening quietly to what the younger girls were saying, "and I believe we ought to show people more than we do that we like them. I don't see why we're so scared to let a person know that we think she's done something well, or to sympathize with her when she's having a hard time."

"O," exclaimed Dorothy shrinkingly, "it's so embarrassing to tell a person you're sorry."

"You don't have to tell her in words," insisted Helen. "You can make her realize that you understand what she is going through and that you'd like to help her."

"How can you do it without talking?" asked Ethel Brown, the practical.

"When I was younger," answered Helen thoughtfully, "I used to be rather afraid of a person who was in trouble. I thought she might think I was intruding if I spoke of it. But Mother told me one day that a person who was suffering didn't

want to be treated as if she were in disgrace and not to be spoken to, and I've always tried to remember it. Now, when I know about it or guess it I make a point of being just as nice as I know how to her. Sometimes we don't talk about the trouble at all; sometimes it comes out naturally after a while. But even if the subject isn't mentioned she knows that there is at least one person who is interested in her and her affairs."

"I begin to see why you're so popular at school," remarked Margaret, who had known for a long time other reasons for Helen's popularity.

Helen threw a leaf at her friend and asked the Ethels to make some lemonade. They had brought the juice in a bottle and chilled water in a thermos bottle, so that the preparation was not hard. There were cold cheese straws to eat with it. The Ethels had made them in their small kitchen at home by rubbing two tablespoonfuls of butter into four tablespoonfuls of flour, adding two tablespoonfuls of grated cheese, seasoning with a pinch of cayenne, another of salt and another of mace, rolling out to a thickness of a quarter of an inch, cutting into strips about four inches long and half an inch wide and baking in a hot oven.

" 'Which I wish to remark and my language is plain,' " Helen quoted, "that in spite of Dicky's picking all the blossoms we have so many flowers now that we ought to do—give them away.

"Ethel Blue and I have been taking some regularly every week to the old ladies at the Home," returned Ethel Brown.

"I was wondering if there were enough to send some to the hospital at Glen Point," suggested Margaret. "The Glen Point people are pretty good about sending flowers, but the hospital is an old story with them and sometimes they don't remember when they might."

"I should think we might send some there and some to the Orphanage," said Dorothy, from whose large garden the greater part of the supply would have to come. "Have the orphans any gardens to work in?"

"They have beds like your school garden here in Rosemont, but they have to give the vegetables to the house and I suppose it isn't much fun to raise vegetables and then have them taken away from you."

"They eat them themselves."

"But they don't know Willy's tomato from Johnny's. If Willy and Johnny were allowed to sell their crops they'd be willing to pay out of the profit for the seed they use and they'd take a lot of interest in it. The housekeeper would buy all they'd raise, and they'd feel that their gardens were self-supporting. Now they feel that the seed is given to them out of charity, and that it's a stingy sort of charity after all because they are forced to pay for the seed by giving up their vegetables whether they want to or not."

"Do they enjoy working the gardens?"

"I should say not! James and I said the other day that they were the most forlorn looking gardeners we ever laid our eyes on."

"Don't they grow any flowers at all?"

"Just a few in a border around the edge of their vegetable gardens and some in front of the main building where they'll be seen from the street."

The girls looked at each other and wrinkled their noses.

"Let's send some there every week and have the children understand that young people raised them and thought it was fun to do it."

"And can't you ask to have the flowers put in the dining-room and the room where the children are in the evening and not in the reception room where only guests will see them?"

"I will," promised Margaret. "James and I have a scheme to try to have the children work their gardens on the same plan that the children do here," she went on. "We're going to get Father to put it before the Board of Management, if we can."

"I do hope he will. The kiddies here are so wild over their gardens that it's proof to any one that it's a good plan."

"Oo-hoo," came Roger's call across the field.

"Oo-hoo. Come up," went back the answer.

"What are you girls talking about?" inquired the young man, arranging himself comfortably with his back against a rock and accepting a paper tumbler of lemonade and some cheese straws.

Helen explained their plan for disposing of the extra flowers from their gardens.

"It's Service Club work; we ought to have started it earlier," she ended.

"The Ethels did begin it some time ago; I caught them at it," he accused, shaking his finger at his sister and cousin.

"I told the girls we had been taking flowers to the Old Ladies' Home," confessed Ethel Brown.

"O, you have! I didn't know that! I did find out that you were supplying the Atwoods down by the bridge with sweetpeas."

"There have been such oodles," protested Ethel Blue.

"Of course. It was the right thing to do."

"How did you know about it, anyway? Weren't you taking flowers there yourself?"

"No, ma'am."

"What were you doing?"

"I know; I saw him digging there one day."

"O, keep still, Dorothy," Roger remonstrated.

"You might as well tell us about it."

"It isn't anything. I did look in one day to ask if they'd like some sweetpeas, but I found the Ethels were ahead of me. The old lady has a fine snowball bush and a beauty syringa in front of the house. When I spoke about them she said she had always wanted to have a bed of white flowers around the two bushes, so I offered to make one for her. That's all."

"Good for Roger!" cried Margaret. "Tell us what you put into it. We've had pink and blue and yellow beds this year; we can add white next year."

"Just common things," replied Roger. "It was rather late so I planted seeds that would hurry up; sweet alyssum for a border, of course, and white

verbenas and balsam, and petunias, and candytuft and phlox and stocks and portulaca and poppies. Do you remember, I asked you, Dorothy, if you minded my taking up that aster that showed a white bud? That went to Mrs. Atwood. The seeds are all coming up pretty well now and the old lady is as pleased as Punch."

"I should think she might be! Can the old gentleman cultivate them or is his rheumatism too bad?"

"I put in an hour there every once in a while," Roger admitted reluctantly.

"It's nothing to be ashamed of!" laughed Helen encouragingly. "What I want to know is how we are to send our flowers in to New York to the Flower and Fruit Guild. Della said she'd look it up and let us know."

"She did. I saw Tom yesterday and he gave me these slips and asked me to tell you girls about them and I forgot it."

Roger bobbed his head by way of asking forgiveness, which was granted by a similar gesture.

"It seems that the National Plant, Flower and Fruit Guild will distribute anything you send to it at 70 Fifth Avenue; or you can select some institution you're interested in and send your stuff directly to it, and if you use one of these Guild pasters the express companies will carry the parcel free."

"Good for the express companies!" exclaimed Ethel Brown.

"Here's one of the pasters," and Roger handed one of them to Margaret while the others crowded about to read it.

APPROVED LABEL

NATIONAL PLANT, FLOWER AND FRUIT GUILD,
70 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

Express Companies
Adams
American
Great Northern
National
United States
Wells Fargo
Western

WILL DELIVER FREE

Within a distance of one hundred (100) miles from stations on their lines to any charitable institution or organization within the delivery limits of adjacent cities. If an exchange of baskets is made they will be returned without charge.

Conditions

This property is carried at owner's risk of loss or damage. No box or basket shall exceed twenty (20) pounds in weight. All jellies to be carefully packed and boxed. All potted plants to be set in boxes.

For *Chapel of Comforter,*
10 Horatio Street,
New York City.

From *United Service Club,*
Rosemont, New Jersey.

KINDLY DELIVER PROMPTLY.

"Where it says 'For,'" explained Roger, "you fill in, say, 'Chapel of the Comforter, 10 Horatio Street' or 'St. Agnes' Day Nursery,' 7 Charles Street,' and you write 'United Service Club, Rosemont, N. J.,' after 'From.'"

"It says 'Approved Label' at the top," Ethel Brown observed questioningly.

"That's so people won't send flowers to their friends and claim free carriage from the express companies on the ground that it's for charity," Roger went on. "Then you fill out this postcard and put it into every bundle you send.

Sender Will Please Fill Out One of These Cards as far as "Received by" and Enclose in Every Shipment.
National Plant, Flower and Fruit Guild.
National Office: 70 Fifth Avenue, N. Y. C.

Sender .....
Town .....
Sends to-day (Date) .....
Plants .....Flowers (Bunches)
Fruit or Vegetables .....Quarts or Bushels
Jelly, Preserved Fruit or Grape Juice (estimated @ ½ pint as a glass) .....Glasses.
Nature Material .....
To (Institution)
Rec'd by
.....
Address .....
Condition ..... Date .....

"That tells the people at the Day Nursery, for instance, just what you packed and assures them that the parcel hasn't been tampered with; they acknowledge the receipt at the foot of the card,—here, do you see?—and send it to the 'New York City Branch, National Plant, Flower and Fruit Guild, 70 Fifth Ave., New York City.' That enables the Guild to see that the express company is reporting correctly the number of bundles it has carried."

"They've worked out the best way after long experience, Tom says, and they find this is excellent. They recommend it to far-off towns that send to them for help about starting a guild."

"Let's send our flowers to Mr. Watkins's chapel," suggested Ethel Blue. "Della told me the people hardly ever see a flower, it's so far to any of the parks where there are any."

"Our women at Rose House were pathetic over

the flowers when they first came," said Helen. "Don't you remember the Bulgarian? She was a country girl and she cried when she first went into the garden."

"I'm glad we planted a flower garden there as well as a vegetable garden."

"It has been as much comfort to the women as ours have been to us."

"I think they would like to send in some flowers from their garden beds to the chapel," suggested Ethel Blue. "I was talking with Mrs. Paterno the other day and she said they all felt that they wanted all their friends to have a little piece of their splendid summer. This will be a way for them to help."

"Mr. Watkins's assistant would see that the bunches were given to their friends if they marked them for special people," said Ethel Brown.

"Let's get it started as soon as we can," said Helen. "You're secretary, Ethel Blue; write to-day to the Guild for some pasters and postcards and tell them we are going to send to Mr. Watkins's chapel; and Ethel Brown, you seem to get on pretty well with Bulgarian and Italian and a few of the other tongues that they speak at Rose House—suppose you try to make the women understand what we are going to do. Tell them we'll let them know on what day we're going to send the parcel in, so that they can cut their flowers the night before and freshen them in salt and water before they travel."

"Funny salt should be a freshener," murmured Dorothy, as the Ethels murmured their understanding of the duties their president assigned to them.

CHAPTER XIII

IN BUSINESS

IT was quite clear to the Clarks that the "botanist" had not given up his hope of buying the field, in spite of the owners' insistence that not only was its title defective but that the option had been promised to Mrs. Smith. He roamed up and down the road almost every day, going into the field, as the girls could see from their elevation in Fitz-James's woods, and stopping at the Clarks' on his return if he saw any of the family on the veranda, to inquire what news had come from their nephew.

"I generally admire persistency," remarked Mr. Clark one day to Mrs. Smith and Dorothy, and the Ethels, "but in this case it irritates me. When you tell a man that you can't sell to him and that you wouldn't if you could it seems as if he might take the hint and go away."

"I don't like him," and Mrs. Smith gave a shrug of distaste. "He doesn't look you squarely in the face."

"I hate that trick he has of brushing his hair out of his eyes. It makes me nervous," confessed the younger Miss Clark.

"I can't see why a botanist doesn't occasionally look at a plant," observed Dorothy. "We've

watched him day after day and we've almost never seen him do a thing except push his stick into the ground and examine it afterwards."

"Do you remember that girl who was with him at the Flower Festival?" inquired Ethel Brown. "I saw her with him again this afternoon at the field. When he pushed his cane down something seemed to stick to it when it came up and he wiped it off with his hand and gave it to her."

"Could you see what it was like?"

"It looked like dirt to me."

"What did she do with it?"

"She took it and began to turn it around in her hand, rubbing it with her fingers the way Dorothy does when she's making her clay things."

Mr. Clark brought down his foot with a thump upon the porch.

"I'll bet you five million dollars I know what he's up to!" he exclaimed.

"What?" "What?" "What?" rang out from every person on the porch.

"I'll go right over there this minute and find out for myself."

"Find out what?"

"Do tell us."

"What do you think it is?"

Mr. Clark paused on the steps as he was about to set off.

"Clay," he answered briefly. "There are capital clays in different parts of New Jersey. Don't you remember there are potteries that make beautiful things at Trenton? I shouldn't wonder a bit if that

field has pretty good clay and this man wants to buy it and start a pottery there."

"Next to my house!" exclaimed Mrs. Smith disgustedly.

"Don't be afraid; if we're ever able to sell the field you're the person who will get it," promised the old gentleman's sisters in chorus. "We don't want a pottery on the street any more than you do," they added, and expressed a wish that their brother might be able to convince the persistent would-be purchaser of the utter hopelessness of his wishes.

"What do you hear from Stanley?" Mrs. Smith asked.

"He's still quite at sea in Pittsburg—if one may use such an expression about a place as far from the ocean as that!" laughed Miss Clark. "He thinks he'll go fast if ever he gets a start, but he hasn't found any trace of the people yet. He's going to search the records not only in Allegheny County but in Washington and Westmoreland and Fayette Counties and the others around Pittsburg, if it's necessary. He surely is persistent."

"Isn't it lucky he is? And don't you hope he'll find some clue before his holidays end? That detective didn't seem to make any progress at all!"

Mr. Clark came back more than ever convinced that he had guessed the cause of the "botanist's" perseverance.

"Unless my eyes and fingers deceive me greatly this is clay and pretty smooth clay," he reported to the waiting group, and Dorothy, who knew some-

thing about clay because she had been taught to model, said she thought so, too.

"We know his reason for wanting the land, then," declared Mr. Clark; "now if we could learn why he can't seem to take it in that he's not going to get it, no matter what happens, we might be able to make him take his afternoon walks in some other direction."

"Who is he? And where is he staying?" inquired Mrs. Smith.

"He calls himself Hapgood and he's staying at the Motor Inn."

"Is the little girl his daughter?"

"I'll ask him if he ever comes here again," and Mr. Clark looked as if he almost wished he would appear, so that he might gratify his curiosity.

The Motor Inn was a house of no great size on the main road to Jersey City. A young woman, named Foster, lived in it with her mother and brother. The latter, George, was a high school friend of Helen and Roger. Miss Foster taught dancing in the winter and, being an enterprising young woman, had persuaded her mother to open the old house for a tea room for the motorists who sped by in great numbers on every fair day, and who had no opportunity to get a cup of tea and a sandwich any nearer than Glen Point in one direction and Athens Creek in the other.

"Here are we sitting down and doing nothing to attract the money out of their pockets and they are hunting for a place to spend it!" she had exclaimed.

The house was arranged like the Emerson farm-

house, with a wide hall dividing it, two rooms on each side. Miss Foster began by putting out a rustic sign which her brother made for her.

MOTOR INN
TEA and SANDWICHES
LUNCHEON DINNER

it read. The entrance was attractive with well-kept grass and pretty flowers. Miss Foster took a survey of it from the road and thought she would like to go inside herself if she happened to be passing.

They decided to keep the room just in front of the kitchen for the family, but the room across the hall they fitted with small tables of which they had enough around the house. The back room they reserved for a rest room for the ladies, and provided it with a couch and a dressing table always kept fully equipped with brushes, pins and hairpins.

"If we build up a real business we can set tables here in the hall," Miss Foster suggested.

"Why not on the veranda at the side?" her mother asked.

"That's better still. We might put a few out there to indicate that people can have their tea there if they want to, and then let them take their choice in fair weather."

The Inn had been a success from the very first day when a car stopped and delivered a load of people who ate their simple but well-cooked luncheon hungrily and liked it so well that they ordered dinner for the following Sunday and promised to send other parties.

"What I like best about your food, if you'll allow me to say so," the host of the machine-load said to Miss Foster, "is that your sandwiches are delicate and at the same time there are more than two bites to them. They are full-grown sandwiches, man's size."

"My brother calls them 'lady sandwiches' though," laughed Miss Foster. "He says any sandwich with the crust cut off is unworthy a man's attention."

"Tell him for me that he's mistaken. No crust on mine, but a whole slice of bread to make up for the loss," and he paid his bill enthusiastically and packed away into his thermos box a goodly pile of the much-to-be-enjoyed sandwiches.

People for every meal of the day began to appear at the Motor Inn, for it was surprising how many parties made a before-breakfast start to avoid the heat of the day on a long trip, and turned up at the Inn about eight or nine o'clock demanding coffee and an omelette. Then one or two Rosemont people came to ask if friends of theirs might be accommodated with rooms and board for a week or two, and in this way the old house by the road grew rapidly to be more like the inn its sign called it than the tea room it was intended to be. Servants were added, another veranda was built on, and it looked as if Miss Foster would not teach dancing when winter came again but would have to devote herself to the management of the village hotel which the town had always needed.

It was while the members of the U. S. C. were

eating ices and cakes there late one afternoon when they had walked to the station with the departing Watkinses that the Ethels had one of the ideas that so often struck them at almost the same moment. It came as they watched a motor party go off, supplying themselves with a box of small cakes for the children after trying to buy from Miss Foster the jar of wild iris that stood in state on the table in the hall. It was not fresh enough to travel they had decided when their hostess had offered to give it to them and they all had examined the purple heads that showed themselves to be past their prime when they were brought out into the light from the semi-darkness of the hall.

"Couldn't we—?" murmured Ethel Blue with uplifted eye-brows, glancing at Ethel Brown.

"Let's ask her if we may?" replied Ethel Brown, and without any more discussion than this they laid before Miss Foster the plan that had popped into their minds ready made. Ethel Brown was the spokeswoman.

"Would you mind if we had a flower counter here in your hall?" she asked. "We need to make some money for our women at Rose House."

"A flower counter? Upon my word, children, you take my breath away!" responded Miss Foster.

"We'd try not to give you any trouble," said Ethel Blue. "One of us would stay here every day to look after it and we'd pay rent for the use of the space."

"Upon my word!" exclaimed Miss Foster again. "You must let me think a minute."

She was a rapid thinker and her decision was quickly made.

"We'll try it for a week," she said. "Perhaps we'll find that there isn't enough demand for the flowers to make it worth while, though people often want to buy any flowers they see here, as those people you saw did."

"If you'll tell us just what space we can have we'll try not to bother you," promised Ethel Blue again, and Miss Foster smiled at her eagerness.

"We want it to be a regular business, so will you please tell us how much rent we ought to pay?" asked Ethel Brown.

Miss Foster smiled again, but she was trying to carry on a regular business herself and she knew how she would feel if people did not take her seriously.

"We'll call it five per cent of what you sell," she said. "I don't think I could make it less," and she smiled again.

"That's five cents on every dollar's worth," calculated Ethel Brown seriously. "That isn't enough unless you expect us to sell a great many dollars' worth."

"We'll call it that for this trial week, anyway," decided Miss Foster. "If the test goes well we can make another arrangement. If you have a pretty table it will be an attraction to my hall and perhaps I shall want to pay you for coming," she added good naturedly.

She pointed out to them the exact spot on which they might place their flowers and agreed to let

them arrange the flowers daily for her rooms and tables and to pay them for it.

"I have no flowers for cutting this summer," she said, "and I've been bothered getting some every day. It has taken George's time when he should have been doing other things."

"We'll do it for the rent," offered Ethel Blue.

"No, I've been buying flowers outside and using my own time in arranging them. It's only fair that I should pay you as I would have paid some one long ago if I could have found the right person. I stick to the percentage arrangement for the rent."

On the way home the girls realized with some discomfiture that without consulting Mrs. Morton and Mrs. Smith they had made an arrangement that would keep them away from home a good deal and put them in a rather exposed position.

"What do you suppose Mother and Aunt Louise will say?" asked Ethel Brown doubtfully.

"I think they'll let us do it. They know we need the money for Rose House just awfully, and they like Miss Foster and her mother—I've heard Aunt Marion say they were so brave about undertaking the Inn."

Her voice quavered off into uncertainty, for she realized as she spoke that what a young woman of Miss Foster's age did in connection with her mother was a different matter from a business venture entered into alone by girls of fourteen.

The fact that the business venture was to be carried on under the eye of Mrs. Foster and her daugh-

ter, ladies whom Mrs. Morton knew well and respected and admired, was the turning point in her decision to allow the girls to conduct the affair which had entered their minds so suddenly. She and Mrs. Smith went to the Inn and assisted in the arrangement of the first assortment of flowers and plants, saw to it that there was a space on the back porch where they could be handled without the water or vases being in the way of the workers in the Inn, suggested that an additional sign reading

PLANTS and CUT FLOWERS

be hung below the sign outside and that a card

FOR THE BENEFIT OF ROSE HOUSE

be placed over the table inside, and then went away and left the girls to manage affairs themselves.

It was while Ethel Blue was drawing the poster to hang over the table that the "botanist" walked into the hall and strolled over to investigate the addition to the furnishings. He asked a question or two in a voice they did not like. They noticed that the young girl with him called him "Uncle Dan" and that he called her "Mary."

The girls had arranged their flowers according to Mrs. Smith's and Mrs. Emerson's ideas, not crowding them but showing each to its best advantage and selecting for each a vase that suited its form and coloring. Their supplies were kept out of sight in order not to mar the effect. The tables of the tea rooms were decorated with pink on this opening day, both because they thought that some

of the guests might see some connection between pink and the purpose of the sale, helping *Rose House*—and for the practical reason that they had more pink blossoms than any other color, thanks to their love of that gay hue.

It was noon before any people outside of the resident guests of the Inn stopped at the house. Then a party of people evidently from a distance, for they were covered with dust, ordered luncheon. While the women were arranging their hair in the dressing room the men came over to the flower table and asked countless questions.

"Here, Gerald," one called to another, "these young women have just begun this business to-day and they haven't had a customer yet. I'm going to be the first; you can be the second."

"Nothing of the sort; I'll be the first myself," and "Gerald" tossed half a dollar on to the table with an order for "Sweetpeas, all pink, please."

Ethel Blue, flushed with excitement over this first sale, set about filling a box with the fresh butterfly blossoms, while Ethel Brown attended to the man who had begun the conversation. He wanted "A bunch of bachelor's buttons for a young lady with blue eyes." An older man who came to see what the younger ones were doing bought buttonholes for all the men and directed that a handful of flowers of different kinds be placed beside each plate on the large table on the shady porch where they were to have their meal.

When the women appeared they were equally interested, and inquired all about Rose House. One

of them directed that enough ferns for the renewal of a centerpiece should be ready for her to take away when they left and the other bought one of the hanging baskets which Roger had arranged as a sample of what they could supply if called upon.

"Roger will be tickled to pieces that his idea caught on at once," Ethel Brown murmured to Ethel Blue as they sorted and packed their orders, not very deftly, but swiftly enough for the posies to add to the enjoyment of the people at the table and for the parcels to be ready for them when the motor came to the door.

"We'll tell all our friends about you," the guests promised as they left.

These were the only patrons until afternoon brought in several parties for tea. Almost every one of them was sufficiently drawn by the "Rose House" placard to make inquiries and several of them bought flowers and potted plants. The same was true of the dinner arrivals.

When the girls examined their receipts for the day they found they had taken in over seven dollars, had booked several orders and already had learned a good deal about what people liked and what they could carry conveniently in their machines.

"We shan't need to have so many cut flowers here," they decided after the day's experience. "It's better to leave them on the plants and then if we run short to telephone to the house and have Dicky bring over an extra supply."

"These potted plants are all right here, though. We can leave them on the back porch at night, Miss

Foster says, and bring them in to the table in the morning."

"We must get Roger to fill some more hanging baskets and ox muzzles and make some ivy balls; those are going to take."

The plan worked out extremely well, its only drawback being that the girls had to give more time to the table at the Inn than they liked. They were "spelled" however, by other members of the Club, and finally, as a result of a trip when they all went away for a few days, they engaged a schoolmate of the Ethels who had helped them occasionally, to give her whole time to the work at the Inn.

Financially the scheme worked out very well. When it came time to pay the rent for the first week the Ethels decided that they were accepting charity if they only paid Miss Foster five per cent. of their gross earnings, so they doubled it.

"I am buying the cut flowers at the same price that the girls are selling them to other customers, and I am glad to pay for their arrangement for it releases me to attend to matters that need me more," she had explained. "Even if it should be a few cents on the wrong side of my account, I am glad to contribute something to Rose House. And the motoring season is comparatively short, too."

Every once in a while they received an idea from some one who asked for something they did not have. One housekeeper wanted fresh herbs and the Ethels telephoned directions for the picking of the herb bed that Roger had planted for their own kitchen use.

"We need the herbs ourselves, Miss Ethel," came back a protest from Mary.

"I don't want to refuse to fill any order I get, Mary," Ethel Brown insisted. "Next year we'll plant a huge bed, enough for a dozen kitchens."

This unexpected order resulted in the making of another poster giving the information that fresh kitchen herbs might be had on order and would be delivered by parcel post to any address.

Several of their customers demanded ferns for their houses indoors or for their porches or wild gardens. This order was not welcome for it meant that some one had to go to the woods to get them as none had been planted in the gardens as yet. Still, in accordance with their decision never to refuse to fill an order unless it was absolutely impossible, the girls went themselves or sent one of the boys on a search for what they needed.

One steady customer was an invalid who lived in Athens Creek and who could drive only a few miles once or twice a week. She happened in to the Inn one day and ever after she made the house her goal. Her especial delight was meadow flowers, and she placed a standing order to have an armful of meadow blossoms ready for her every Thursday. This necessitated a visit to the meadows opposite Grandfather Emerson's house every Wednesday afternoon so that the flowers should have recovered from their first shock by the next morning.

"This takes me back to the days when I used to follow the flowers through the whole summer," the invalid cried delightedly. "Ah, Joe-Pye-Weed has

arrived," she exclaimed joyfully over the handsome blossom.

When the Ethels and Dorothy received their first order for the decoration of a house for an afternoon reception they were somewhat overcome.

"Can we do it?" they asked each other.

They concluded they could. One went to the house two days beforehand to examine the rooms and to see what vases and bowls they should have at their disposal. Then they looked over the gardens very carefully to see what blossoms would be cut on the appointed day, and then they made a plan with pencil and paper.

Mr. Emerson lent his car on the morning of the appointed day and Roger went with them to unload the flowers and plants. They had kept the flowers of different colors together, a matter easy to do when cutting from their beds of special hues, and this arrangement made easy the work of decorating different rooms in different colors. The porch was made cool with ferns and hanging vines; the hall, which seemed dark to eyes blinded by the glare outside, was brightened with yellow posies; the dining room had delicate blue lobelia mingled with gypsophila springing from low, almost unseen dishes all over the table where the tea and coffee were poured, and hanging in festoons from the smaller table on which stood the bowl of grape juice lemonade, made very sour and very sweet and enlivened with charged water. The girls profited by this combination, for the various amounts used in it were being "tried out" during the morning and with every new trial refresh-

ing glasses were handed about for criticism by the workers.

In the drawing room where the hostess stood to receive, superb pink poppies reared their heads from tall vases, pink snapdragons bobbed on the mantel piece and a bank of pink candytuft lay on the top of the piano. A lovely vine waved from a wall vase of exquisite design and vines trailed around the wide door as naturally as if they grew there instead of springing from bottles of water concealed behind tall jars of pink hollyhocks.

"It is perfectly charming, my dears, and I can't tell you how obliged I am," said their hostess as she pressed a bill into Ethel Brown's hand. "I know that every woman who will be here will want you the next time she entertains, and I shall tell everybody you did it."

She was as good as her word and the attempt resulted in several other orders. The girls tried to make each house different from any that they had decorated before, and they thought that they owed the success that brought them many compliments to the fact that they planned it all out beforehand and left nothing to be done in a haphazard way.

Meanwhile Rose House benefited greatly by the welcome weekly additions from the flower sale to its slender funds.

"I'm not sure it isn't roses ye are yerselves, yer that sweet to look at!" exclaimed Moya, the cook at Rose House, one day when the girls were there.

And they admitted themselves that if happiness made them sweet to look at it must be true.

CHAPTER XIV

UNCLE DAN'S RESEARCHES

"UNCLE DAN," whose last name was Hapgood, did not cease his calls upon the Clarks. Sometimes he brought with him his niece, whose name, they learned, was Mary Smith.

"Another Smith!" ejaculated Dorothy who had lived long enough in the world to find out the apparent truth of the legend, that originally all the inhabitants of the earth were named Smith and so continued until some of them misbehaved and were given other names by way of punishment.

No one liked Mr. Hapgood better as time went on.

"I believe he is a twentieth century werwolf, as Dorothy said," Ethel Brown insisted. "He's a wolf turned into a man but keeping the feelings of a wolf."

The girls found little to commend in the manners of his niece and nothing to attract. By degrees the "botanist's" repeated questioning put him in command of all the information the Clarks had themselves about the clue that Stanley was hunting down. He seemed especially interested when he learned that the search had been transferred to the vicinity of Pittsburg.

"My sister, Mary's mother, lived near Pittsburg,"

he told them when he heard it; "I know that part of the country pretty well."

For several days he was not seen either by the Clarks or by the girls who went to the Motor Inn to attend to the flowers, and Mrs. Foster told the Ethels that Mary had been left in her care while her uncle went away on a business trip.

At the end of a week he appeared again at the Clarks', bringing the young girl with him. He received the usual courteous but unenthusiastic reception with which they always met this man who had forced himself upon them so many times. Now his eyes were sparkling and more nervously than ever he kept pushing back the lock of hair that hung over his forehead.

"Well, I've been away," he began.

The Clarks said that they had heard so.

"I been to western Pennsylvania."

His hearers expressed a lukewarm interest.

"I went to hunt up the records of Fayette County concerning the grandparents of Mary here."

"I hope you were successful," remarked the elder Miss Clark politely.

"Yes, ma'am, I was," shouted Hapgood in reply, thumping his hand on the arm of his chair with a vigor that startled his hosts. "Yes, sir, I was, sir; perfectly successful; *en*-tirely successful."

Mr. Clark murmured something about the gratification the success must be to Mr. Hapgood and awaited the next outburst.

It came without delay.

"Do you want to know what I found out?"

"Certainly, if you care to tell us."

"Well, I found out that Mary here is the granddaughter of your cousin, Emily Leonard, you been huntin' for."

"Mary!" exclaimed the elder Miss Clark startled, her slender hands fluttering agitatedly as the man's heavy voice forced itself upon her ears and the meaning of what he said entered her mind.

"This child!" ejaculated the younger sister, Miss Eliza, doubtfully, adjusting her glasses and leaning over to take a closer look at the proposed addition to the family.

"Hm!"

This comment came from Mr. Clark.

A dull flush crept over Hapgood's face.

"You don't seem very cordial," he remarked.

"O," the elder Miss Clark, Miss Maria, began apologetically, but she was interrupted by her brother.

"You have the proofs, I suppose."

Hapgood could not restrain a glare of dislike, but he drew a bundle of papers from his pocket.

"I knew you'd ask for 'em."

"Naturally," answered the calm voice of Mr. Clark.

"So I copied these from the records and swore to 'em before a notary."

"You copied them yourself?"

"Yes, sir, with my own hand," and the man held up that member as if to call it as a witness to his truth.

"I should have preferred to have had the copying

done by a typist accredited by the county clerk," said Mr. Clark coolly.

Hapgood flushed angrily.

"If you don't believe me—" he began, but Mr. Clark held up a warning finger.

"It's always wise to follow the custom in such cases," he observed.

Hapgood, finding himself in the wrong, leaned over Mr. Clark's shoulder and pointed eagerly to the notary's signature.

"Henry Holden—that's the notary—that's him," he repeated several times insistently.

Mr. Clark nodded and read the papers slowly aloud so that his sisters might hear their contents. They recited the marriage at Uniontown, the county seat of Fayette County, Pennsylvania, on the fifteenth day of December, 1860, of Emily Leonard to Edward Smith.

"There you are," insisted Hapgood loudly. "That's her; that's the grandmother of Mary here."

"You're sure of that?"

"Here's the record of the birth of Jabez, son of Edward and Emily (Leonard) Smith two years later, and the record of his marriage to my sister and the record of the birth of Mary. After I got the marriage of this Emily straightened out the rest was easy. We had it right in the family."

The two sisters gazed at each other aghast. The man was so assertive and coarse, and the child was so far from gentle that it seemed impossible that she could be of their own blood. Still, they remembered that surroundings have greater influence than

inheritance, so they held their peace, though Miss Maria stretched out her hand to Mary. Mary stared at it but made no move to take it.

"Your records look as if they might be correct," said Mr. Clark, an admission greeted by Hapgood with a pleased smile and a complacent rub of the hands; "but," went on the old gentleman, "I see nothing here that would prove that this Emily Leonard was our cousin."

"But your nephew, Stanley, wrote you that he had found that your Emily had removed to the neighborhood of Pittsburg."

"That's true," acknowledged the elder man, bending his head, "but Emily Leonard isn't an unusual name."

"O, she's the one all right," insisted Hapgood bluffly.

"Further, your record doesn't state the names of this Emily Leonard's parents."

Hapgood tossed back the unruly lock of hair.

"I ought to have gone back one step farther," he conceded. "I might have known you'd ask that."

"Naturally."

"I'll send to the county clerk and get that straightened out."

"It might be well," advised Mr. Clark mildly. "One other point prevents my acceptance of these documents as proof that your niece belongs to our family. Neither the investigator whom we had working on the case nor my nephew have ever told us the date of birth of our Emily Leonard. We can, of course, obtain that, if it is not already in my

nephew's possession, but without it we can't be sure that our cousin was of marriageable age on December fifteenth, 1860."

It was Mr. Clark's turn to rub his hands together complacently as Hapgood looked more and more discomfited.

"In fact, my dear sir," Mr. Clark continued, "you have proved nothing except that some Emily Leonard married a man named Smith on the date named."

He tapped the papers gently with a thin forefinger and returned them to their owner, who began to bluster.

"I might have known you'd put up a kick," he exclaimed.

"I live, when I'm at home, in Arkansas," replied Mr. Clark softly, "and Arkansas is so near Missouri that I have come to belong to the brotherhood who 'have to be shown.' "

Hapgood greeted this sally with the beginning of a snarl, but evidently thought it the part of discretion to remain friendly with the people he wanted to persuade.

"I seem to have done this business badly," he said, "but I'll send back for the rest of the evidence and you'll have to admit that Mary's the girl you need to complete your family tree."

"Come here, dear," Miss Clark called to Mary in her quiet voice. "Are your father and mother alive?"

"Father is," she thought the child answered, but her reply was interrupted by Hapgood's loud voice, saying, "She's an orphan, poor kid. Pretty tough

just to have an old bachelor uncle to look after yer, ain't it?"

The younger Miss Clark stepped to the window to pull down the shade while the couple were still within the yard and she saw the man give the girl a shake and the child rub her arm as if the touch had been too rough for comfort.

"Poor little creature! I can't say I feel any affection for her, but she must have a hard time with that man!"

The interview left Mr. Clark in a disturbed state in spite of the calmness he had assumed in talking with Hapgood. He walked restlessly up and down the room and at last announced that he was going to the telegraph office.

"I might as well wire Stanley to send us right off the date of Emily Leonard's birth, and, just as soon as he finds it, the name of the man she married."

"If she did marry," interposed Miss Maria. "Some of our family don't marry," and she humorously indicated the occupants of the room by a wave of her knitting needles.

At that instant the doorbell rang, and the maid brought in a telegram.

"It's from Stanley," murmured Mr. Clark.

"What a strange co-incidence," exclaimed the elder Miss Clark.

"What does he say, Brother?" eagerly inquired the younger Miss Clark.

"'Emily married a man named Smith,'" Mr. Clark read slowly.

"Is that all he says?"

"Every word."

"Dear boy! I suppose he thought we'd like to know as soon as he found out!" and Miss Eliza's thoughts flashed away to the nephew she loved, forgetting the seriousness of the message he had sent.

"The information seems to have come at an appropriate time," commented Mr. Clark grimly.

"It must be true, then," sighed Miss Maria; "that Mary belongs to us."

"We don't know at all if Hapgood's Emily is our Emily, even if they did both marry Smiths," insisted Mr. Clark stoutly, his obstinacy reviving. "I shall send a wire to Stanley at once asking for the dates of Emily's birth and marriage. He must have them both by this time; why on earth doesn't he send full information and not such a measly telegram as this!" and the old gentleman put on his hat and took his cane and stamped off in a rage to the Western Union office.

The sisters left behind gazed at each other forlornly.

"She certainly is an unprepossessing child," murmured Miss Maria, "but don't you think, under the circumstances, that we ought to ask her to pay us a visit?"

Miss Clark the elder contemplated her knitting for a noticeable interval before she answered.

"I don't see any 'ought' about it," she replied at last, "but I think it would be kind to do so."

Meanwhile Mr. Clark, stepping into the telegraph office, met Mr. Hapgood coming out. That worthy looked somewhat startled at the encounter,

but pulled himself together and said cheerfully "Just been sending off a wire about our matter."

When the operator read Mr. Clark's telegram a few minutes later he said to himself wonderingly, "Emily Leonard sure is the popular lady!"

Mr. Clark was not at all pleased with his sister's proposal that they invite Mary Smith to make them a visit.

"It will look to Hapgood as if we thought his story true," he objected, when they suggested the plan the next morning. "I don't believe it is true, even if our Emily did marry a Smith, according to Stanley."

"I don't believe it is, either," answered Miss Maria dreamily. "A great many people marry Smiths."

"They have to; how are they to do anything else?" inquired the old gentleman testily. "There is such a lot of them you can't escape them. We're talking about your name, ladies," he continuued as Dorothy and her mother came in, and then he related the story of Hapgood's visit and the possibility that Mary might prove to belong to them.

"Do you think he honestly believes that she's the missing heir?" Mrs. Smith asked.

The ladies looked uncertain but there was no doubt in their brother's mind.

"Not for a moment of time do I think he does," he shouted.

"But what would be his object? Why should he try to thrust the child into a perfectly strange family?"

The elder Miss Clark ventured a guess.

"He may want to provide for her future if she's really an orphan, as he says."

"I don't believe she is an orphan. Before her precious uncle drowned her reply with one of his roars I distinctly heard her say that her father was alive," retorted the exasperated Mr. Clark.

"The child would be truly fortunate to have all of you dear people to look after her," Mrs. Smith smiled, "but if her welfare isn't his reason, what is?"

"I believe it has something to do with that piece of land," conjectured Mr. Clark. "He never said a word about it to-night. That's a bad sign. He wants that land and he's made up his mind to have it and this has something to do with it."

"How could it have?" inquired Mrs. Smith.

"This is all I can think of. Before we can sell that land or any of our land we must have the consent of all the living heirs or else the title isn't good, as you very well know. Now Emily Leonard and her descendants are the only heirs missing. This man says that the child, Mary, is Emily Leonard's grandchild and that Emily and her son, the child's father, are dead. That would mean that if we wanted to sell that land we'd be obliged to have the signatures of my sisters and my nephew, Stanley, and myself, and also of the guardian of this child. Of course Hapgood will say he's the child's guardian. Do you suppose, Mrs. Smith, that he's going to sign any deed that gives you that land? Not much! He'll say it's for the child's best interests that the land be not sold now, because it contains valuable

clay or whatever it is he thinks he has found there. Then he'll offer to buy the land himself and he'll be willing enough to sign the deed then."

"But *we* might not be," interposed Miss Maria.

"I should say not," returned her brother emphatically, "but he'd probably make a lot of trouble for us and be constantly appealing to us on the ground that we ought to sell the land for the child's good—or he might even say for Stanley's good or our good, the brazen, persistent animal."

"Brother," remonstrated Miss Maria. "You forget that you may be speaking of the uncle of our little cousin."

"Little cousin nothing!" retorted Mr. Clark fiercely. "It's all very nice for the Mortons to find that that charming girl who takes care of the Belgian baby is a relative. This is a very different proposition! However, I suppose you girls—" meaning by this term the two ladies of more than seventy—"won't be happy unless you have the youngster here, so you might as well send for her, but you'd better have the length of her visit distinctly understood."

"We might say a week," suggested Miss Eliza hesitatingly.

"Say a week, and say it emphatically," approved her brother, and trotted off to his study, leaving the ladies to compose, with Mrs. Smith's help, a note that would not be so cordial that Brother would forbid its being sent, but that would nevertheless give a hint of their kindly feeling to the forlorn child, so roughly cared for by her strange uncle.

Mary Smith went to them, and made a visit that could not be called a success in any way. She was painfully conscious of the difference between her clothes and the Ethels' and Dorothy's and Della's, though why theirs seemed more desirable she could not tell, since her own were far more elaborate. The other girls wore middy blouses constantly, even the older girls, Helen and Margaret, while her dresses were of silk or some other delicate material and adorned with many ruffles and much lace.

She was conscious, too, of a difference between her manners and theirs, and she could not understand why, in her heart, she liked theirs better, since they were so gentle as to seem to have no spirit at all, according to her views. She was always uncomfortable when she was with them and her efforts to be at ease caused her shyness to go to the other extreme and made her manners rough and impertinent.

Mrs. Smith found her crying one day when she came upon her suddenly in the hammock on the Clarks' veranda.

"Can I help?" she asked softly, leaning over the small figure whose every movement indicated protest.

"No, you can't," came back the fierce retort. "You're one of 'em. You don't know."

"Don't know what?"

"How I feel. Nobody likes me. Miss Clark just told me to go out of her room."

"Why were you in her room?"

"Why, shouldn't I go into her room? When I woke up this morning I made up my mind I'd do my

best to be nice all day long. They're so old I don't know what to talk to 'em about, but I made up my mind I'd stick around 'em even if I didn't know what to say. Right after breakfast they always go upstairs—I think it's to be rid of me—and they don't come down for an hour, and then they bring down their knitting and their embroidery and they sit around all day long except when that Belgian baby that lives at your house comes in—then they get up and try to play with her."

Mrs. Smith smiled, remembering the efforts of the two old ladies to play with "Ayleesabet." Mary noticed the smile.

"They do look fools, don't they?" she cried eagerly.

"I think they look very dear and sweet when they are playing with Ayleesabet. I was not smiling *at* them but because I sympathized with their enjoyment of the baby."

"Well, I made up my mind they needn't think they had to stay upstairs because I wasn't nice; I'd go upstairs and be nice. So I went upstairs to Miss Maria's room and walked in."

"Walked right in? Without knocking?"

"I walked right in. She was sitting in front of that low table she has with the looking glass and all the bottles and boxes on it. Her hair was down her back—what there was of it—and she was doing up her switch."

Mrs. Smith was so aghast at this intrusion and at the injured tone in which it was told that she had no farther inclination to smile.

"I said, 'I thought I'd come up and sit with you a while,' and she said, 'Leave the room at once, Mary,' just like that. She was as mad as she could be."

"Do you blame her?"

"Why should she be mad, when I went up there to be nice to her? She's an old cat!"

"Dear child, come and sit on this settee with me and let's talk it over."

Mrs. Smith put her arm over the shaking shoulders of the angry girl and drew her toward her. After an instant's stiffening against it Mary admitted to herself that it was pleasant; she didn't wonder Dorothy was sweet if her mother did this often.

"Now we're comfortable," said Mrs. Smith. "Tell me, dear, aren't there some thoughts in your mind that you don't like to tell to any one? thoughts that seem to belong just to you yourself? Perhaps they're about God; perhaps they're about people you love, perhaps they're about your own feelings—but they seem too private and sacred for you to tell any one. They're your own, ownest thoughts."

Mary nodded.

"Do you remember your mother?"

Mary nodded again.

"Sometimes when you recall how she took you in her arms and cuddled you when you were hurt, and how you loved her and she loved you I know you think thoughts that you couldn't express to any one else."

Mary gave a sniff that hinted of tears.

"Everybody has an inner life that is like a church.

You know you wouldn't think of running into a church and making a noise and disturbing the worshippers. It's just so with people's minds; you can't rush in and talk about certain things to any one—the things that he considers too sacred to talk about."

"How are you going to tell?"

Mrs. Smith drew a long breath. How was she to make this poor, untutored child understand.

"You have to tell by your feelings," she answered slowly. "Some people are more reserved than others. I believe you are reserved."

"Me?" asked Mary wonderingly.

"It wouldn't surprise me if there were a great many things that you might have talked about with your mother, if she had lived, but that you find it hard to talk about with your uncle."

Mary nodded.

"He's fierce," she commented briefly.

"If he should begin to talk to you about some of the tender memories that you have of your mother, for instance, it might be hard for you to answer him. You'd be apt to think that he was coming into your own private church."

"I see that," the girl answered; "but," returning to the beginning of the conversation, "I didn't want to talk secrets with Miss Maria; I just wanted to be nice."

"Just in the same way that people have thoughts of their very own that you mustn't intrude on, so there are reserves in their habits that you mustn't intrude on. Every one has a right to freedom from intrusion. I insist on it for myself; my daughter

never enters my bedroom without knocking. I pay her the same respect; I always tap at her door and wait for her answer before I enter."

"Would you be mad if she went into your room without knocking?"

"I should be sorry that she was so inconsiderate of my feelings. She might, perhaps, interrupt me at my toilet. I should not like that."

"Is that what I did to Miss Maria?"

"Yes, dear, it was. You don't know Miss Maria well, and yet you opened the door of her private room and went in without being invited."

"I'm sorry," she said briefly.

"I'm sure you are, now you understand why it wasn't kind."

"I wish she knew I meant to be nice."

"Would you like to have me tell her? I think she'll understand there are some things you haven't learned for you haven't a mother to teach you."

"Uncle Dan says maybe I'll have to live with the old ladies all the time, so they might as well know I wasn't trying to be mean," she whispered resignedly.

"I'll tell Miss Maria, then, and perhaps you and she will be better friends from now on because she'll know you want to please her. And now, I came over to tell you that the U. S. C. is going into New York to-day to see something of the Botanical Garden and the Arboretum. I'm going with them and they'd be glad to have you go, too."

"They won't be very glad, but I'd like to go," responded the girl, her face lighted with the nearest approach to affection Mrs. Smith ever had seen upon it.

CHAPTER XV

FUR AND FOSSILS

WHEN the Club gathered at the station to go into town Mary was arrayed in a light blue satin dress as unsuitable for her age as it was for the time of day and the way of traveling. The other girls were dressed in blue or tan linen suits, neat and plain. Secretly Mary thought their frocks were not to be named in the same breath with hers, but once when she had said something about the simplicity of her dress to Ethel Blue, Ethel had replied that Helen had learned from her dressmaking teacher that dresses should be suited to the wearer's age and occupation, and that she thought her linen blouses and skirts were entirely suitable for a girl of fourteen who was a gardener when she wasn't in school.

This afternoon Dorothy had offered her a pongee dust coat when she stopped at the Smiths' on her way to the cars.

"Aren't you afraid you'll get that pretty silk all cindery?" she asked.

Mary realized that Dorothy thought her not appropriately dressed for traveling, but she tossed her head and said, "O, I like to wear something good looking when I go into New York."

One of the purposes of the expedition was to see at the Museum of Natural History some of the fossil leaves and plants about which the Mortons had heard

from Lieutenant and Captain Morton who had found several of them themselves in the course of their travels.

At the Museum they gathered around the stones and examined them with the greatest interest. There were some shells, apparently as perfect as when they were turned into stone, and others represented only by the moulds they had left when they crumbled away. There were ferns, the delicate fronds showing the veining that strengthened the leaflets when they danced in the breeze of some prehistoric morning.

"It's wonderful!" exclaimed the Ethels, and Mary asked, "What happened to it?"

"I thought some one would ask that," replied Mrs. Smith, "so I brought these verses by Mary Branch to read to you while we stood around one of these ancient rocks."

THE PETRIFIED FERN

"In a valley, centuries ago
Grew a little fern-leaf, green and slender,
Veining delicate and fibers tender;
Waving when the wind crept down so low.
Rushes tall and moss and grass grew round it,
Playful sunbeams darted in and found it,
Drops of dew stole in by night and crowned it,
But no foot of man e'er trod that way;
Earth was young and keeping holiday.

"Monster fishes swam the silent main;
Stately forests waved their giant branches,
Mountains hurled their snowy avalanches

Mammoth creatures stalked across the plain;
Nature revelled in grand mysteries,
But the little fern was not of these,
Did not number with the hills and trees;
Only grew and waved its wild sweet way,
No one came to note it day by day.

'Earth, one time, put on a frolic mood,
Heaved the rocks and changed the mighty motion
Of the deep, strong currents of the ocean;
Moved the plain and shook the haughty wood
Crushed the little fern in soft, moist clay,—
Covered it and hid it safe away.
O, the long, long centuries since that day!
O, the changes! O, life's bitter cost,
Since that useless little fern was lost!

"Useless? Lost? There came a thoughtful man
Searching Nature's secrets, far and deep;
From a fissure in a rocky steep
He withdrew a stone, o'er which there ran
Fairy pencilings, a quaint design,
Veinings, leafage, fibers clear and fine,
And the fern's life lay in every line!
So, I think, God hides some souls away,
Sweetly to surprise us, the last day."

From the Museum the party went to the Bronx where they first took a long walk through the Zoo. How Mary wished that she did not have on a pale blue silk dress and high heeled shoes as she dragged her tired feet over the gravel paths and stood watching Gunda, the elephant, "weaving" back and forth on his chain, and the tigers and leopards keeping up

their restless pacing up and down their cages, and the monkeys, chattering hideously and snatching through the bars at any shining object worn by their visitors! It was only because she stepped back nimbly that she did not lose a locket that attracted the attention of an ugly imitation of a human being.

The herds of large animals pleased them all.

"How kind it is of the keepers to give these creatures companions and the same sort of place to live in that they are accustomed to," commented Ethel Brown.

"Did you know that this is one of the largest herds of buffalo in the United States?" asked Tom, who, with Della, had joined them at the Museum. "Father says that when he was young there used to be plenty of buffalo on the western plains. The horse-car drivers used to wear coats of buffalo skin and every new England farmer had a buffalo robe. It was the cheapest fur in use. Then the railroads went over the plains and there was such a destruction of the big beasts that they were practically exterminated. They are carefully preserved now."

"The prairie dogs always amuse me," said Mrs. Smith. "Look at that fellow! Every other one is eating his dinner as fast as he can but this one is digging with his front paws and kicking the earth away with his hind paws with amazing industry."

"He must be a convict at hard labor," guessed Roger.

"Or the Mayor of the Prairie Dog Town setting an example to his constituents," laughed James.

The polar bear was suffering from the heat and

nothing but the tip of his nose and his eyes were to be seen above the water of his tank where he floated luxuriously in company with two cakes of ice.

The wolves and the foxes had dens among rocks and the wild goats stood daintily on pinnacles to see what was going on at a distance. No one cared much for the reptiles, but the high flying cage for birds kept them beside it for a long time.

Across the road they entered the grounds of the Arboretum and passed along a narrow path beside a noisy brook under heavy trees, until they came to a grove of tall hemlocks. With upturned heads they admired these giants of the forest and then passed on to view other trees from many climes and countries.

"Here's the Lumholtz pine that father wrote me about from Mexico," cried Ethel Blue, whose father, Captain Morton, had been with General Funston at Vera Cruz. "See, the needles hang down like a spray, just as he said. You know the wood has a peculiar resonance and the Mexicans make musical instruments of it."

"It's a graceful pine," approved Ethel Brown. "What a lot of pines there are."

"We are so accustomed about here to white pines that the other kinds seem strange, but in the South there are several kinds," contributed Dorothy. "The needles of the long leaf pine are a foot long and much coarser than these white pine needles. Don't you remember, I made some baskets out of them?"

The Ethels did remember.

"Their green is yellower. The tree is full of resin and it makes the finest kind of kindling."

"Is that what the negroes call 'light wood'?" asked Della.

"Yes, that's light wood. In the fields that haven't been cultivated for a long time there spring up what they call in the South 'old field pines' or 'loblolly pines.' They have coarse yellow green needles, too, but they aren't as long as the others. There are three needles in the bunch."

"Don't all the pines have three needles in the bunch?" asked Margaret.

"Look at this white pine," she said, pulling down a bunch off a tree they were passing. "It has five; and the 'Table Mountain pine' has only two."

"Observant little Dorothy!" exclaimed Roger.

"O, I know more than that," laughed Dorothy. "Look hard at this white pine needle; do you see, it has three sides, two of them white and one green? The loblolly needle has only two sides, though the under is so curved that it looks like two; and the 'Table Mountain' has two sides."

"What's the use of remembering all that?" demanded Mary sullenly.

Dorothy, who had been dimpling amusedly as she delivered her lecture, flushed deeply.

"I don't know," she admitted.

"We like to hear about it because we've been gardening all summer and anything about trees or plants interests us," explained Tom politely, though the way in which Mary spoke seemed like an attack on Dorothy.

"I've always found that everything I ever learned was useful at some time or other," James maintained decidedly. "You never can tell when this information that Dorothy has given us may be just what we need for some purpose or other."

"It served Dorothy's purpose just now when she interested us for a few minutes telling about the different kinds," insisted Ethel Blue, but Mary walked on before them with a toss of her head that meant "It doesn't interest me."

Dorothy looked at her mother, uncertain whether to take it as a joke or to feel hurt. Mrs. Smith smiled and shook her head almost imperceptibly and Dorothy understood that it was kindest to say nothing more.

They chatted on as they walked through the Botanical Gardens and exclaimed over the wonders of the hothouses and examined the collections of the Museum, but the edge had gone from the afternoon and they were not sorry to find themselves on the train for Rosemont. Mary sat with Mrs. Smith.

"I really was interested in what Dorothy told about the pines," she whispered as the train rumbled on; "I was mad because I didn't know anything that would interest them, too."

"I dare say you know a great many things that would interest them," replied Mrs. Smith. "Some day you must tell me about the most interesting thing you ever saw in all your life and we'll see if it won't interest them."

"That was in a coal mine," replied Mary promptly. "It was the footstep of a man thousands

and thousands of years old. It made you wonder what men looked like and how they lived so long ago."

"You must tell us all about it, some time. It will make a good addition to what we learned to-day about the fossils."

When the Mortons reached home they found Mr. Emerson waiting for them at their house.

"I've a proposal to make to these children, with your permission, Marion," he said to his daughter.

"Say on, sir," urged Roger.

"Mr. Clark is getting very nervous about this man Hapgood. The man is beginning to act as if he, as the guardian of the child, had a real claim on the Clark estate, and he becomes more and more irritating every day. They haven't heard from Stanley for several days. He hasn't answered either a letter or a telegram that his uncle sent him and the old ladies are working themselves into a great state of anxiety over him. I tell them that he has been moving about all the time and that probably neither the letter nor the wire reached him, but Clark vows that Hapgood has intercepted them and his sisters are sure the boy is ill or has been murdered."

"Poor creatures," smiled Mrs. Morton sympathetically. "Is there anything you can do about it?"

"I told Clark a few minutes ago that I'd go out to western Pennsylvania and hunt up the boy and help him run down whatever clues he has. Clark was delighted at the offer—said he didn't like to go himself and leave his sisters with this man roaming around the place half the time."

"It was kind of you. I've no doubt Stanley is working it all out well, but, boy-like, he doesn't realize that the people at home want to have him report to them every day."

"My proposal is, Marion, that you lend me these children, Helen and the Ethels and Roger, for a few days' trip."

"Wow, wow!" rose a shout of joy.

"Or, better still, that you come, too, and bring Dicky."

Mrs. Morton was not a sailor's wife for nothing.

"I'll do it," she said promptly. "When do you want us to start?"

"Can you be ready for an early morning train from New York?"

"We can!" was the instant reply of every person in the room.

CHAPTER XVI

FAIRYLAND

ALL day long the train pulled its length across across the state of Pennsylvania, climbing mountains and bridging streams and piercing tunnels. All day long Mr. Emerson's party was on the alert, dashing from one side to the other of the car to see some beautiful vista or to look down on a brook brawling a hundred feet below the trestle that supported them or waving their hands to groups of children staring open-mouthed at the passing train.

"Pennsylvania is a beautiful state," decided Ethel Brown as they penetrated the splendid hills of the Allegheny range.

"Nature made it one of the most lovely states of the Union," returned her grandfather. "Man has played havoc with it in spots. Some of the villages among the coal mines are hideous from the waste that has been thrown out for years upon a pile never taken away, always increasing. No grass grows on it, no children play on it, the hens won't scratch on it. The houses of the miners turn one face to this ugliness and it is only because they turn toward the mountains on another side that the people are preserved from the death of the spirit that comes to those who look forever on the unlovely."

"Is there any early history about here?" asked

Helen, whose interest was unfailing in the story of her country.

"The French and Indian Wars were fought in part through this land," answered Mr. Emerson. "You remember the chief struggle for the continent lay between the English and the French. There were many reasons why the Indians sided with the French in Canada, and the result of the friendship was that the natives were supplied with arms by the Europeans and the struggle was prolonged for about seventy-five years."

"Wasn't the attack on Deerfield during the French and Indian War?" asked Ethel Blue.

"Yes, and there were many other such attacks."

"The French insisted that all the country west of the Alleghenies belonged to them and they disputed the English possession at every point. When Washington was only twenty-one years old he was sent to beg the French not to interfere with the English, but he had a hard journey with no fortunate results. It was on this journey that he picked out a good position for a fort and started to build it. It was where Pittsburg now stands."

"That was a good position for a fort, where the Allegheny and Monongahela Rivers join to make the Ohio," commended Roger.

"It was such a good position that the French drove off the English workmen and finished the work themselves. They called it Fort Duquesne and it became one of a string of sixty French forts extending from Quebec to New Orleans."

"Some builders!" commended Roger.

"Fort Duquesne was so valuable that the English sent one of their generals, Braddock, to capture it. Washington went with him on his staff, to show him the way."

"It must have been a long trip from the coast through all this hilly country."

"It was. They had to build roads and they were many weeks on the way."

"It was a different matter from the twentieth century transportation of soldiers by train and motor trucks and stages," reminded Mrs. Morton.

"When the British were very near Fort Duquesne," continued Mr. Emerson, "the French sent out a small band, mainly Indians, to meet them. The English general didn't understand Indian fighting and kept his men massed in the road where they were shot down in great numbers and he lost his own life. There's a town named after him, on the site of the battle."

"Here it is," and Helen pointed it out on the map in the railway folder. "It's about ten miles from Pittsburg."

"Washington took command after the death of Braddock, and this was his first real military experience. However, his heart was in the taking of Fort Duquesne and when General Forbes was sent out to make another attempt at capturing it Washington commanded one of the regiments of Virginia troops."

"Isn't there any poetry about it?" demanded Ethel Brown, who knew her grandfather's habit of collecting historical ballads.

"Certainly there is. There are some verses on 'Fort Duquesne' by Florus Plimpton written for the hundredth anniversary of the capture.

"Did they have a great old fight to take the fort?" asked Roger.

"No fight at all. Here's what Plimpton says:—

"So said: and each to sleep addressed his wearied limbs and mind,
And all was hushed i' the forest, save the sobbing of the wind,
And the tramp, tramp, tramp of the sentinel, who started oft in fright
At the shadows wrought 'mid the giant trees by the fitful camp-fire light.

"Good Lord! what sudden glare is that that reddens all the sky,
As though hell's legions rode the air and tossed their torches high!
Up, men! the alarm drum beats to arms! and the solid ground seems riven
By the shock of warring thunderbolts in the lurid depth of heaven!

"O, there was clattering of steel and mustering in array,
And shouts and wild huzzas of men, impatient of delay,
As came the scouts swift-footed in—'They fly! the foe! they fly!
They've fired the powder magazine and blown it to the sky.'

"All the English had to do was to walk in, put out the fire, repair the fort and re-name it."

"What did they call it?"

"After the great statesman—Fort Pitt."

"That's where 'Pittsburg' got its name, then! I never thought about its being in honor of Pitt!" exclaimed Helen.

"It is 'Pitt's City,'" rejoined her grandfather. "And this street," he added somewhat later when they were speeding in a motor bus to a hotel near the park, "this street is Forbes Street, named after the British general. Somewhere there is a Bouquet Street, to commemorate another hero of the war."

"I saw 'Duquesne Way' marked on the map," announced Ethel Blue.

On the following morning they awakened to find themselves opposite a large and beautiful park with a mass of handsome buildings rising impressively at the entrance.

"It is Schenley Park and the buildings house the Carnegie Institute. We'll go over them by and bye."

"It's a library," guessed Dicky, who was not too young to have the steelmaker's name associated with libraries in his youthful mind.

"It is a library and a fine one. There's also a Music Hall and an art museum and a natural history museum. You'll see more fossil ferns there, and the skeleton of a diplodocus—"

"A dip-what?" demanded Roger.

"Diplodocus, with the accent on the *plod*; one of the hugest animals that ever walked the earth. They found the bones of this monster almost complete in Colorado and wired them together so you

can get an idea of what really 'big game' was like in the early geological days."

"How long is he?"

"If all the ten members of the U. S. C. were to take hold of hands and stretch along his length there would be space for four or five more to join the string."

"Where's my hat?" demanded Roger. "I want to go over and make that fellow's acquaintance instanter."

"When you go, notice the wall paintings," said his mother. "They show the manufacture and uses of steel and they are considered among the finest things of their kind in America. Alexander, the artist, did them. You've seen some of his work at the Metropolitan Museum in New York."

"Pittsburg has the good sense to have a city organist," Mr. Emerson continued. "Every Sunday afternoon he plays on the great organ in the auditorium and the audience drifts in from the park and drifts out to walk farther, and in all several thousand people hear some good music in the course of the afternoon."

"There seem to be some separate buildings behind the Institute."

"The Technical Schools, and beyond them is the Margaret Morrison School where girls may learn crafts and domestic science and so on."

"It's too bad it isn't a clear day," sighed Ethel Blue, as she rose from the table.

"This is a bright day, Miss," volunteered the waiter who handed her her unnecessary sunshade.

"You call this clear?" Mrs. Morton asked him.

"Yes, madam, this is a bright day for Pittsburg."

When they set forth they shook their heads over the townsman's idea of a clear day, for the sky was overcast and clouds of dense black smoke rolled together from the two sides of the city and met over their heads.

"It's from the steel mills," Mr. Emerson explained as he advised Ethel Brown to wipe off a smudge of soot that had settled on her cheek and warned his daughter that if she wanted to preserve the whiteness of her gloves she had better replace them by colored ones until she returned to a cleaner place.

They were to take the afternoon train up the Monongahela River to the town from which Stanley Clark had sent his wire telling his uncle that "Emily Leonard married a man named Smith," but there were several hours to devote to sightseeing before train time, and the party went over Schenley Park with thoroughness, investigated several of the "inclines" which carried passengers from the river level to the top of the heights above, motored among the handsome residences and ended, on the way to the station, with a flying visit to the old blockhouse which is all that is left of Port Pitt.

"So this is really a blockhouse," Helen said slowly as she looked at the little two story building with its heavy beams.

"There are the musket holes," Ethel Brown pointed out.

"This is really where soldiers fought before the Revolution!"

"It really is," her mother assured her. "It is in the care of one of the historical societies now; that's why it is in such good condition."

Roger had secured the tickets and had telephoned to the hotel at Brownsville for rooms so they took their places in the train with no misgivings as to possible discomfort at night. Their excitement was beginning to rise, however, for two reasons. In the first place they had been quite as disturbed as Dorothy and her mother over the difficulties attending the purchase of the field and the Fitz-James Woods, and the later developments in connection with the man, Hapgood. Now that they were approaching the place where they knew Stanley Clark was working out the clue they began to feel the thrill that comes over explorers on the eve of discovery.

The other reason for excitement lay in the fact that Mr. Emerson had promised them some wonderful sights before they reached their destination. He had not told them what they were, although he had mentioned something about fairyland that had started an abundant flow of questions from Dicky. Naturally they were all alert to find out what novelty their eyes were to see.

"I saw one novelty this afternoon," said Roger. "When I stepped into that little stationery shop to get a newspaper I noticed in the rear a queer tin thing with what looked like cotton wool sticking against its back wall. I asked the woman who sold the papers what it was."

"Trust Roger for not letting anything pass him," smiled Ethel Brown.

"That's why I'm such a cyclopedia of accurate information, ma'am," Roger retorted. "She said it was a stove."

"With cotton wool for fuel?" laughed Ethel Blue.

"It seems they use natural gas here for heating as well as cooking, and the woolly stuff was asbestos. The gas is turned on at the foot of the back wall and the asbestos becomes heated and gives off warmth but doesn't burn."

"I stayed in Pittsburg once in a boarding house where the rooms were heated with natural gas," said Mr. Emerson. "It made a sufficient heat, but you had to be careful not to turn the burner low just before all the methodical Pittsburgers cooked dinner, for if you made it too low the flame might go out when the pressure was light."

"Did the opposite happen at night?"

"It did. In the short time I was there the newspapers noted several cases of fires caused by people leaving their stoves turned up high at night and the flames bursting into the room and setting fire to some inflammable thing near at hand when the pressure grew strong after the good Pittsburgers went to bed."

"It certainly is useful," commended Mrs. Morton. "A turn of the key and that's all."

"No coal to be shovelled—think of it!" exclaimed Roger, who took care of several furnaces in winter. "No ashes to be sifted and carried away! The thought causes me to burst into song," and he chanted ridicuously:—

"Given a tight tin stove, asbestos fluff,
A match of wood, an iron key, and, puff,
Thou, Natural Gas, wilt warm the Arctic wastes,
And Arctic wastes are Paradise enough."

As the train drew out of the city the young people's expectations of fairyland were not fulfilled.

"I don't see anything but dirt and horridness, Grandfather," complained Ethel Brown.

Mr. Emerson looked out of the window thoughtfully for a moment.

"True," he answered, "it's not yet dark enough for the magic to work."

"No wonder everything is sooty and grimy with those chimneys all around us throwing out tons and tons of soft coal smoke to settle over everything. Don't they ever stop?"

"They're at it twenty-four hours a day," returned her grandfather. "But night will take all the ugliness into its arms and hide it; the sordidness and griminess will disappear and fairyland will come forth for a playground. The ugly smoke will turn into a thing of beauty. The queer point of it all is," he continued, shaking his head sadly, "fairyland is there all the time and always beautiful, only you can't see it."

Dicky's eyes opened wide and he gazed out of the window intent on peering into this mysterious invisible playground.

"Lots of things are like that," agreed Roger. "Don't you remember how those snowflakes we looked at under the magnifying glass on Ethel Blue's birthday burst into magnificent crystals? You

wouldn't think a handful of earth—just plain dirt—was pretty, would you? But it is. Look at it through a microscope and see what happens."

"But, Grandfather, if the beauty is there right now why can't we see it?" insisted Ethel Brown.

Mr. Emerson stared out of the window for a moment.

"That was a pretty necklace of beads you strung for Ayleesabet."

"We all thought they were beauty beads."

"And that was a lovely string of pearls that Mrs. Schermerhorn wore at the reception for which you girls decorated her house."

There could be no disagreement from that opinion.

"Since Ayleesabet is provided with such beauties we shan't have to fret about getting her anything else when she goes to her coming-out party, shall we?"

"What are you saying, Grandfather!" exclaimed Helen. "Of course Ayleesabet's little string of beads can't be compared with a pearl necklace!"

"There you are!" retorted Mr. Emerson; "Helen has explained it. This fairyland we are going to see can't be compared with the glory of the sun any more than Ayleesabet's beads can be compared with Mrs. Schermerhorn's pearls. We don't even see the fairyland when the sun is shining but when the sun has set the other beauties become clear."

"O-o-o!" shouted Dicky, whose nose had been glued to the window in an effort to prove his grandfather's statement; "look at that funny umbrella!"

Everybody jumped to one window or another, and they saw in the gathering darkness a sudden blast of

flame and white hot particles shooting into the air and spreading out like an umbrella of vast size.

"Look at it!" exclaimed the two Ethels, in a breath; "isn't that beautiful! What makes it?"

"The grimy steel mills of the daytime make the fairyland of night," announced Mr. Emerson.

Across the river they noticed suddenly that the smoke pouring from a chimney had turned blood red with tongues of vivid flame shooting through it like pulsing veins. There was no longer any black smoke. It had changed to heavy masses of living fire of shifting shades. Great ingots of steel sent the observers a white hot greeting or glowed more coolly as the train shot by them. Huge piles of smoking slag that had gleamed dully behind the mills now were veined with vivid red, looking like miniature volcanoes streaked with lava.

It was sometimes too beautiful for words to describe it suitably, and sometimes too terrible for an exclamation to do it justice. It created an excitement that was wearying, and when the train pulled into Brownsville it was a tired party that found its way to the hotel.

As the children went off to bed Mr. Emerson called out "To-morrow all will be grime and dirt again; fairyland has gone."

"Never mind, Grandfather," cried Ethel Brown, "we won't forget that it is there just the same if only we could see it."

"And we'll think a little about the splendiferousness of the sun, too," called Helen from the elevator. "I never thought much about it before."

CHAPTER XVII

THE MISSING HEIRESS

MR. EMERSON'S investigations proved that Stanley Clark had left Brownsville several days previously and had gone to Millsboro, farther up the Monongahela.

He had left that as his forwarding address, the hotel clerk said. This information necessitated a new move at once, so the next morning, bright and early, Mr. Emerson led his party to the river where they boarded a little steamer scarcely larger than a motor boat.

They were soon puffing away at a fair rate of speed against the sluggish current. The factories and huge steel plants had disappeared and the banks looked green and country-like as mile after mile slipped by. Suddenly Roger, who was sitting by the steersman's wheel, exclaimed, "Why, look! there's a waterfall in front of us."

So, indeed, there was, a wide fall stretching from shore to shore, but Roger, eyeing it suspiciously, added in an aggrieved tone, "But it's a dam. Must be a dam. Look how straight it is."

"How on earth," called Ethel Blue, "are we going to get over it?"

"Jump up it the way Grandpa told me the salmon fishes do," volunteered Dicky.

Everybody laughed, but Mr. Emerson declared that was just about what they were going to do. The boat headed in for one end of the dam and her passengers soon found themselves floating in a granite room, with huge wooden doors closed behind them. The water began to boil around them, and as it poured into the lock from unseen channels the boat rose slowly. In a little while the Ethels cried that they could see over the tops of the walls, and in a few minutes more another pair of big gates opened in front of them and they glided into another chamber and out into the river again, this time above the "falls."

"I feel as if I had been through the Panama Canal," declared Ethel Blue.

"That's just the way its huge locks work," said Mrs. Morton. "The next time your Uncle Roger has a furlough I hope it will be long enough for us to go down there and see it."

"I wonder," asked Roger, "if there are many more dams like this on the Monongahela."

"There's one about every ten miles," volunteered the steersman. "Until the government put them in only small boats could go up the river. Now good sized ones can go all the way to Wheeling, West Virginia. If you want to, you can go by boat all the way from Wheeling to the Gulf of Mexico."

"The Gulf of Mexico," echoed the two Ethels. Then they added, also together, "So you can!" and Ethel Brown said, "The Indians used to go from the upper end of Lake Chautauqua to the Gulf

in their canoes? When they got to Fort Duquesne it was easy paddling."

"What is that high wharf with a building on it overhanging the river?" asked Helen.

"That's a coal tipple," said her grandfather. "Do you see on shore some low-lying houses and sheds? They are the various machinery plants and offices of the coal mine and that double row of small houses a quarter of a mile farther up is where the employés live."

As the boat continued up the river it passed many such tipples. They were now in the soft coal country, the steersman said, and in due time they arrived at Millsboro, a little town about ten miles above Brownsville.

Here Mr. Emerson made immediate inquiries about Stanley Clark, and found that he had gone on, leaving "Uniontown, Fayette County," as his forwarding address. "That's the county seat where Hapgood says he copied his records," said Mr. Emerson. "I hope we shall catch young Clark there and get that matter straightened out."

As there was no train to Uniontown until the afternoon, Mr. Emerson engaged a motor car to take them to a large mine whose tipple they had passed on the way up. The Superintendent was a friend of the driver of the car and he willingly agreed to show them through. Before entering the mine he pointed out to them samples of coal which he had collected. Some had fern leaves plainly visible upon their surfaces and others showed leaves of trees and shrubs.

"Fairy pencilings, a quaint design,
Veinings, leafage, fibers clear and fine,"

quoted Ethel Blue softly, as she looked at them.

Mrs. Morton stopped before a huge block of coal weighing several tons and said to her son, "Here's a lump for your furnace, Roger."

"Phew," said Roger. "Think of a furnace large enough to fit that lump! Do you get many of them?" he asked of the Superintendent.

"We keep that," said the Superintendent, "because it's the largest single lump of coal ever brought out of this mine. Of course, we could get them if we tried to, but it's easier to handle it in smaller pieces."

"What'th in that little houthe over there?" asked Dicky. "Theems to me I thee something whithing round."

"That's the fan that blows fresh air into the mine so that the miners can breathe, and drives out the poisonous and dangerous gases."

"What would happen if the fan stopped running?" asked Ethel Brown.

"Many things might happen," said the Superintendent gravely. "Men might suffocate for lack of air, or an explosion might follow from the collection of the dreaded 'fire damp' ignited by some miner's lamp."

"Fire damp?" repeated Mrs. Morton. "That is really natural gas, isn't it?"

"Yes, they're both 'marsh gas' caused by the decay of the huge ferns and plants of the carboniferous age. Some of them hardened into coal and others rotted when they were buried, and the gas was caught

in huge pockets. It is gas from these great pockets that people use for heating and cooking all about here and even up into Canada."

Ethel Brown had been listening and the words "some of them hardened into coal" caught her ear. She went close to her grandfather's side.

"Tell me," she said, "exactly what is coal and how did it get here?"

"What *I* want to know," retorted Mr. Emerson, "is what brand of curiosity you have in your cranium, and how did it get there? Answer me that."

Ethel Brown laughed.

"Let's have a lecture," she urged, "and," handing her grandfather a small lump of coal, "here's your text."

Mr. Emerson turned the bit of coal over and over.

"When I look at this little piece of black stone," he said, "I seem to see dense forests filled with luxuriant foliage and shrubbery and mammoth trees under which move sluggish streams draining the swampy ground. The air is damp and heavy and warm."

"What about the animals?"

"There are few animals. Most of them are water creatures, though there are a few that can live on land and in the water, too, and in the latter part of the coal-making period enormous reptiles crawled over the wet floor of the forest. Life is easy in all this leafy splendor and so is death, but no eye of man is there to look upon it, no birds brighten the dense green of the trees, and the ferns and shrubs

have no flowers as we know them. The air is heavy with carbon."

"Where was the coal?"

"The coal wasn't made yet. You know how the soil of the West Woods at home is deep with decayed leaves? Just imagine what soil would be if it were made by the decay of these huge trees and ferns! It became yards and yards deep and silt and water pressed it down and crushed from it almost all the elements except the carbon, and it was transformed into a mineral, and that mineral is coal."

"Coal? Our coal?"

"Our coal. See the point of a fern leaf on this bit?" and he held out the piece of coal he had been holding. "That fern grew millions of years ago."

"Isn't it delicate and pretty!" exclaimed Ethel Blue, as it reached her in passing from hand to hand, "and also not as clean as it once was!" she added ruefully, looking at her fingers.

By way of preparation for their descent into the mine each member of the party was given a cap on which was fastened a small open wick oil lamp. They did not light them, however, until they had all been carried a hundred feet down into the earth in a huge elevator. Here they needed the illumination of the tiny lamps whose flicker made dancing shadows on the walls.

Following the Superintendent their first visit was to the stable.

"What is a stable doing down here?" wondered Ethel Brown.

"Mules pull the small cars into which the miners toss the coal as they cut it out. These fellows probably will never see the light of day again," and their leader stroked the nose of the animal nearest him which seemed startled at his touch.

"He's almost blind, you see," the Superintendent explained. "His eyes have adjusted themselves to the darkness and even these feeble lights dazzle him."

The girls felt the tears very near their eyelids as they thought of the fate of these poor beasts, doomed never to see the sun again or to feel the grass under their feet.

"I once knew a mule who was so fond of music that he used to poke his head into the window near which his master's daughter was playing on the piano," said the Superintendent, who noticed their agitation and wanted to amuse them. "We might get up band concerts for these fellows."

"Poor old things, I believe they would like it!" exclaimed Helen.

"This is a regular underground village," commented Mrs. Morton, as they walked for a long distance through narrow passages until they found themselves at the heading of a drift where the men were working.

"Is there any gas here?" asked the Superintendent, and when the miners said "Yes," he lifted his hand light, which was encased in wire gauze, and thrust it upwards toward the roof and gave a grunt as it flickered near the top.

There it was, the dreaded fire-damp, in a layer

above their heads. One touch of an open flame and there would be a terrible explosion, yet the miners were working undisturbed just beneath it with unprotected lamps on their caps. The visitors felt suddenly like recruits under fire—they were far from enjoying the situation but they did not want to seem alarmed. No one made any protest, but neither did any one protest when the Superintendent led the way to a section of the mine where there was no gas that they might see a sight which he assured them was without doubt wonderful.

They were glad that they had been assured that there was no fire-damp here, for their leader lifted his lamp close to the roof. Ethel Blue made the beginning of an exclamation as she saw his arm rising, but she smothered her cry for her good sense told her that this experienced man would not endanger the lives of himself or his guests. The coal had been taken out very cleanly, and above them they saw not coal but shale.

"What is shale?" inquired Helen.

"Hardened clay," replied the Superintendent. "There were no men until long after the carboniferous period when coal was formed, but just in this spot it must have happened that the soil that had gathered above the deposits of coal was very light for some reason or other. Above the coal there was only a thin layer of soft clay. One day a hunter tramped this way and left his autograph behind."

He held his lamp steadily upward, and there in the roof were the unmistakable prints of the soles of a man's feet, walking.

"It surely does look mightily as if your explanation was correct," exclaimed Mr. Emerson, as he gazed at the three prints, in line and spaced as a walker's would be. Their guide said that there had been six, but the other three had fallen after being exposed to the air.

"I wish it hadn't been such a muddy day," sighed Ethel Blue. "The mud squeezed around so that his toe marks were filled right up."

"It certainly was a muddy day," agreed Roger, "but I'm glad it was. If he had been walking on rocks we never should have known that he had passed this way a million or so years ago."

They were all so filled with interest that they were almost unwilling to go on in the afternoon, although Mr. Emerson promised them other sights around Uniontown, quite different from any they had seen yet.

It was late in the afternoon when they ferried across the river in a boat running on a chain, and took the train for the seat of Fayette County. As the daylight waned they found themselves travelling through a country lighted by a glare that seemed to spread through the atmosphere and to be reflected back from the clouds and sky.

"What is it?" Dicky almost whimpered, as he snuggled closer to his mother.

"Ask Grandfather," returned Mrs. Morton.

"It's the glare from the coke ovens," answered Mr. Emerson. "Do you see those long rows of bee-hives? Those are ovens in which soft coal is being burned so that a certain ingredient called bi-

tumen may be driven off from it. What is left after that is done is a substance that looks somewhat like a dry sponge if that were gray and hard. It burns with a very hot flame and is invaluable in the smelting of iron and the making of steel."

"That's why they make so much here," guessed Ethel Brown, who had been counting the ovens and was well up in the hundreds with plenty more in sight. "Here is where they make most of the iron and steel in the United States and they have to have coke for it."

"And you notice how conveniently the coal beds lie to the iron mines? Nature followed an efficiency program, didn't she?" laughed Roger.

"They turn out about twenty million tons of coke a year just around here," Helen read from her guidebook, "and it is one of the two greatest coke burning regions of the world!"

"Where's the other?"

"In the neighborhood of Durham, England."

"It is a wonderful sight!" exclaimed Ethel Blue. "I never knew fire could be so wonderful and so different!"

Mr. Emerson's search for Stanley Clark seemed to be a stern chase and consequently a long one. Here again the hotel clerk told him that Mr. Clark had gone on, this time to Washington, the seat of Washington County. He was fairly sure that he was still there because he had received a letter from him just the day before asking that something he had left behind should be sent him to that point, which was done.

As soon as the Record Office was open in the morning Mr. Emerson and Roger went there.

"We might as well check up on Hapgood's investigations," said Mr. Emerson. "They may be all right, and he may be honestly mistaken in thinking that his Emily is the Clarks' Emily; or he may have faked some of his records. It won't take us long to find out. Mr. Clark let me take his copy of Hapgood's papers."

It was not a long matter to prove that Hapgood's copy of the records was correct. Emily Leonard had married Edward Smith; their son, Jabez, had married a Hapgood and Mary was their child. Where Hapgood's copy had been deficient was in his failing to record that this Emily Leonard was the daughter of George and Sabina Leonard, whereas the Clarks' Emily was the daughter of Peter and Judith Leonard.

"There's Hapgood's whole story knocked silly," remarked Mr. Emerson complacently.

"But it leaves us just where we were about the person the Clarks' Emily married."

"Stanley wouldn't have telegraphed that she married a Smith if he hadn't been sure. He sent that wire from Millsboro, you know. He must have found something in that vicinity."

"I'm going to try to get him on the telephone tonight, and then we can join him in Washington tomorrow if he'll condescend to stay in one spot for a few hours and not keep us chasing over the country after him."

"That's Jabez Smith over there now," the clerk,

who had been interested in their search, informed them.

"Jabez Smith!" repeated Roger, his jaw dropped.

"Jabez Smith!" repeated Mr. Emerson. "Why, he's dead!"

"Jabez Smith? The Hapgood woman's husband? Father of Mary Smith? He isn't dead. He's alive and drunk almost every day."

He indicated a man leaning against the wall of the corridor and Mr. Emerson and Roger approached him.

"Don't you know the Miss Clarks said they thought that Mary said her father was alive but her uncle interrupted her loudly and said she was 'an orphan, poor kid'?" Roger reminded his grandfather.

"She's half an orphan; her mother really is dead, the clerk says."

Jabez Smith acknowledged his identity and received news of his brother-in-law and his daughter with no signs of pleasure.

"What scheming is Hapgood up to now?" he muttered crossly.

"Do you remember what your grandfather and grandmother Leonards' names were," asked Mr. Emerson.

The man looked at him dully, as if he wondered what trick there might be in the inquiry, but evidently he came to the conclusion that his new acquaintance was testing his memory, so he pulled himself together and after some mental searching answered, "George Leonard; Sabina Leonard."

His hearers were satisfied, and left him still supporting the Court House wall with his person instead of his taxes.

Stanley, the long pursued, was caught on the wire, and hailed their coming with delight. He said that he thought he had all the information he needed and that he had been planning to go home the next day, so they were just in time.

"That's delightful; he can go with us," exclaimed Ethel Brown, and Helen and Roger looked especially pleased.

The few hours that passed before they met in Washington were filled with guesses as to whether Stanley had built up the family tree of his cousin Emily so firmly that it could not be shaken.

"We proved this morning that Hapgood's story was a mixture of truth and lies," Mr. Emerson said, "but we haven't anything to replace it. Our evidence is all negative."

"Stanley seems sure," Roger reminded him.

When Stanley met them at the station in Washington he seemed both sure and happy. He shook hands with them all.

"It is perfectly great to have you people here," he said to Helen.

"Have you caught Emily?" she replied, dimpling with excitement.

"I have Emily traced backwards and forwards. Let's go into the writing room of the hotel and you shall see right off how she stands."

They gathered around the large table and listened to the account of the young lawyer's adventures.

He had had a lead that took him to Millsboro soon after he reached western Pennsylvania, but he missed the trail there and spent some time in hunting in surrounding towns before he came on the record in the Uniontown courthouse.

"I certainly thought I had caught her then," he confessed. "I thought so until I compared the ages of the two Emilies. I found that our Emily would have been only ten years old at the time the Uniontown Emily married Edward Smith."

"Mr. Clark wired you to find out just that point."

"Did he? I never received the despatch. Hadn't I told him the date of our Emily's birth?

"He has a crow to pick with you over that."

"Too bad. Well, I moseyed around some more, and the trail led me back to Millsboro again, where I ought to have found the solution in the first place if I had been more persevering. I came across an old woman in Millsboro who had been Emily Leonard's bridesmaid when she married Julian Smith. That sent me off to the county seat and there I found it all set down in black and white;—Emily Leonard, adopted daughter of Asa Wentworth and daughter of Peter and Judith (Clark) Leonard. There was everything I wanted."

"You knew she had been adopted by a Wentworth?"

"I found that out before I left Nebraska."

"What was the date of the marriage?"

"1868. She was eighteen. Two years later her only child, a son, Leonard, was born, and she died—"

"Her son Leonard! Leonard Smith!" exclaimed Mrs. Morton suddenly. "Do you suppose—" she hesitated, looking at her father.

He raised his eyebrows doubtfully, then turning to Stanley he inquired:

"You didn't find out what became of this Leonard Smith, did you?"

"I didn't find any record of his marriage, but I met several men who used to know him. They said he became quite a distinguished musician, and that he married a Philadelphia woman."

"Did they know her name?" asked Mrs. Morton, leaning forward eagerly.

"One of them said he thought it was Martin. Smith never came back here to live after he set forth to make his fortune, so they were a little hazy about his marriage and they didn't know whether he was still alive."

"The name wasn't Morton, was it?"

The girls looked curiously at their mother, for she was crimson with excitement. Stanley could take them no farther, however.

"Father," Mrs. Morton said to Mr. Emerson, as the young people chattered over Stanley's discoveries, "I think I'd better send a telegram to Louise and ask her what her husband's parents' names were. Wouldn't it be too strange if he should be the son of the lost Emily?"

Mr. Emerson hurried to the telegraph office and sent an immediate wire to "Mrs. Leonard Smith, Rosemont, N. J. Wire names of your husband's parents," it read.

The answer came back before morning;—"Julian and Emily Leonard Smith."

"Now why in the wide world didn't she remember that when we've done nothing but talk about Emily Leonard for weeks!" cried Mrs. Smith's sister-in-law impatiently.

"I dare say she never gave them a thought; Leonard Smith's mother died when he was born, Stanley says. How about the father, Stanley?"

"Julian Smith? He died years ago. I saw his death record this morning."

"Then I don't see but you've traced the missing heir right to your own next door neighbor, Stanley."

"It looks to me as if that was just what had happened," laughed the young lawyer. "Isn't that jolly! It's Dorothy whose guardian's signature is lacking to make the deed of the field valid when we sell it to her mother!"

"It's Dorothy who is a part owner of Fitz-James's woods already!" cried the Ethels.

Another telegram went to Rosemont at once. This one was addressed to "Miss Dorothy Smith." It said, "Stanley welcomes you into family. Congratulations from all on your good fortune," and it was signed "The Travellers."

THE END

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